PRESBYTERIAN LIFE

December 25, 1954 Vol. 7, No. 25

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"Rest on the Flight into Egypt"
by Simone Cantarini (1612-1648)
PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART

Thy Presence in Our Christmas

DEAR GOD AND FATHER OF US ALL, we come to this glad season with sure trust that light shineth in our darkness, and the darkness cannot put it out. Stars still shine above the clouds that cast their shadows in our time. Hope stirs in human hearts despite the tumult and the shouting of a world gone mad. Above the dark streets shining, the everlasting light of Christ brings promise to the troubled souls of men. So, in trust we venture on.

Our gratitude is great, O God, for Christmas brings new lightness to our hearts. The laughter of our children takes from our lives the strain and stress we feel. The affection of good friends renews our faith in life. The sound of bells on busy streets reminds us of the joy that lingers on the edge of grief. Homecomings warm our souls and strengthen ties of love that sweeten life. When carols sing their way across the silence of a holy night, we know within our hearts that all is well.

We thank thee for the dreams that cluster "round yon Virgin Mother and Child." Somehow we know, dear God, those dreams will never die. The hopes and fears of all the years are met in him who came that Holy Night. The stars in their courses are one with the forces unleashed in him. So we are grateful for his way, even when we betray it; for his truth, even when we forget its meaning; for his life, even when we hear the summons, "Follow me," and turn aside.

Remember thou thy children wherever they may be. Abide with those who serve their country in far places and preserve them in the good. Bind them to those they love with ties of memory and homely trust. If there be those who sorrow, our Father, bind thou their wounds with comfort and with strength. Grant unto them the inner trust whose sinews gird the darkest days with dignity and poise. Grant to us all the benediction of thy presence in our Christmas. We pray in Jesus's name. AMEN.

—HAROLD BLAKE WALKER
Minister, First Presbyterian Church
Evanston, Illinois

Presbyterian Life
Dec. 25, 1954

PRESBYTERIAN LIFE is published every other Saturday except in August, when only one issue is published, by PRESBYTERIAN LIFE, INC. Publication offices: 8 McCall Street, Dayton 1, Ohio. **Send undeliverable copies returned under Form 3579 to: PRESBYTERIAN LIFE, McCall Street, Dayton 1, Ohio.** Entered as second class matter December 23, 1949, at the postoffice in Dayton, Ohio, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Subscription prices: Individual—$2.00 per year; Every Home Plan—$1.00 per year. Single copies: 15c each; 25 or more in bulk: 10c each.

Vol. 7
No. 25

SOUNDING BOARD

'What Can We Learn from Roman Catholics?'

« The article on "What Can We Learn from Roman Catholics?" by the Reverend Charles B. Hanna [*P.L., Oct. 30, 1954*] was excellent. Protestant-Catholic prejudice is undoubtedly less heated and less apparent than it was earlier in the century. However, it does persist, and it comes to the surface in some most unusual manifestations. Protestants should be heartened and proud to read articles like that of Mr. Hanna. . . .

—ELLIS W. ROBERTS
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

Moderator Won Young Lee

« . . . You might be interested in some additional facts about Moderator Lee ["*A Day with the Moderator of the Korean Presbyterian Church,*" *P.L., Oct. 30, 1954*].

His clan was considered in our part of the country, at least, the noblest in all Korea. A pastor once told me that if in the olden days an intelligent Korean had been asked whether he would rather be the son of the king of Korea, or the head of this Lee clan, he would have chosen to be the head of the Lee clan. . . .

Won Young Lee became a Christian while in jail because of his participation in the Independence demonstrations of 1919. Later he was in jail again because he would not join in Shinto worship. . . .

—JOHN Y. CROTHERS
Retired Missionary to Korea
Berkeley, California

'Doting but Dozing'

« . . . Thank you for giving us John Calvin Reid's "Doting but Dozing" *(October 30 issue)*. The gifted cartoonist may agree with Walter Lippman that the greatest danger of the moment is the type of character that has been produced en masse by the multitudes who spend their jet-propelled lives trying to defy the God they didn't like in Sunday school; who, while seeming successful in their defiance, have at the same time lost their nerve for living. At home in bed Sunday morning is a partial escape mechanism.

Charles T. Leber, general secretary, Board of Foreign Missions, in his book of several years ago, *The Church Must Win*, page 142, points to a frequently published magazine advertisement seeking to sell space in American Sunday newspapers' comic sections: " 'Sunday morning . . . no alarm clock at the alert, no bus to catch . . . letdown for most of us from the long week past, lull before the week to come . . . to loaf through the Sunday paper . . . to think, to talk, to plan, to play.' What is contained and what is missing in the ad? 'Let down,' 'loaf,' 'plan,' 'play;' but the Christian Church is not visible in this advertisement." . . .

C. RANSOM COMFORT
Minister, Fourth Avenue Presbyterian Church
Louisville 3, Kentucky

Origin of the Celtic Cross

« Since the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America has adopted the Celtic cross as its emblem, I would like to point out that this cross is not of Scottish origin but of Irish. . . . The Westminster Book Stores are advertising [St. John's] Celtic crosses. These are copies of ones in Scotland, but where did the Scots get their Celtic art?

I was born and educated in Ireland and have studied the Gaelic language, Irish history, and, to a lesser extent, Celtic art.

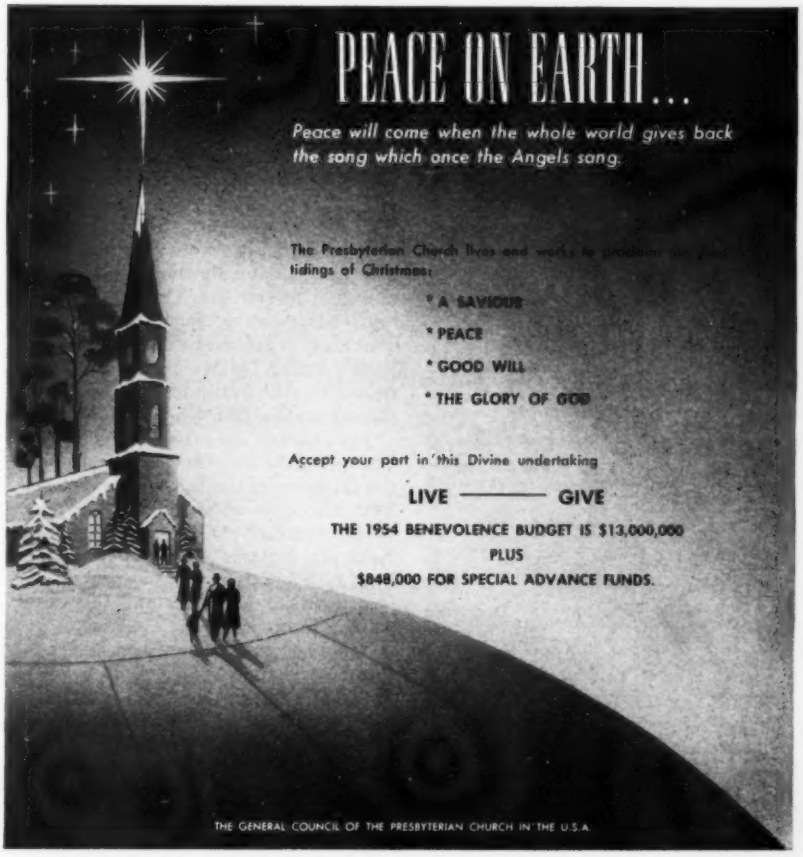
In [Ireland] there is concrete evidence of this very early Celtic art. Just fifteen miles from my home is an historic ruin known as "Cashel of the Kings," where can be found a magnificent example of the Celtic cross. There is also a fine example in Monasterboice in County Louth. . . .

There were a few scattered Christians in Ireland when St. Patrick came to its shores in 432 A.D. He, by his teachings, converted the Irish chieftains and the people followed their chieftains. One of these conversions was that of King Cormac, and he was baptised by St. Patrick at the aforementioned "Cashel of the Kings."

Ireland then became known as "The Island of Saints and Scholars." From this little island, Christian missionaries went forth to preach the gospel. One of these was St. Columcille (meaning 'dove of the church') who exiled himself to Scotland and built his little church on the Island of Iona off the west coast of Scotland. It was from Columcille's Island of Iona that Scotland was converted.

So where did Scotland get its Celtic cross and its Christianity? I think it is very plain to see that the Celts brought it over from . . . Ireland.

The word Celtic is mispronounced by English speaking people. The *C* is a hard *C* and pronounced like an English *K*. Incidentally, there is no letter *K* as we know it in the Gaelic language. So the word *Celtic* should be pronounced "keltic." MRS. DONALD E. LANCASTER
Wheatridge, Colorado



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Send undeliverable copies returned under Form 3579 to: PRESBYTERIAN LIFE, McCall Street, Dayton 1, Ohio.
Advertising Offices: J. Morgan Harding, 130 South Juniper St., Phila. 7, Pennsylvania. **New York:** Arthur W. Wilson and Associates, 40 East 50th St., New York 22, New York. **Chicago:** John R. Rutherford and Associates, 230 East Ohio St., Chicago 11, Illinois. **Los Angeles:** Ned Brydone-Jack, 714 West Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles 15, California. **Subscriptions** and correspondence regarding subscriptions should be sent to PRESBYTERIAN LIFE, McCall Street, Dayton 1, Ohio, or to **Mrs. E. S. Gruber,** Subscription Manager, PRESBYTERIAN LIFE, Witherspoon Building, Phila. 7, Pa.
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PRINTED IN U. S. A.

CREDITS:

Pages 26-30, 35: Drawings by Richard Horwitz; Page 5: Acme Special Services and Henry McCorkle; Page 10-13, 18, 20, 23: Carl G. Karsch; Page 33: Joseph Elkins.

MEDITATIONS

By Park Hays Miller

"Unto you . . . this day"

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. . . .

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. . . .

And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. . . .

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them. (Luke 2:7, 8, 11, 16, 20)

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. . . . (Matthew 2:2-3)

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshiped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. (Matthew 2:11)

But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart (Luke 2:19)

WHEN the angels said to the shepherds, "Unto you . . . this day," they meant not only the shepherds but everyone everywhere. The day of Jesus's birth has meaning for everyone. How does each of us receive the reminder of Jesus's birth? Do we see ourselves reflected in the attitudes of those who shared in the first Christmas scene?

For example, there was the innkeeper. The city of Bethlehem was crowded, and the facilities of the inn were overtaxed. The innkeeper no doubt did not mean to be heartless to the travelers from Nazareth; he was simply overwhelmed by the demands of his business. There was no room for Mary and the Child, so soon to be born.

The weeks past have been filled with business activity. Stores have been crowded. Sales forces and purchasers have been rushed. It has been a time of stress. Have the material demands of the Christmas season crowded the Child Jesus out of our minds and hearts?

The shepherds were in the routine of their work. They were not rushed or under stress like the innkeeper and the others in Bethlehem, for they were quietly caring for their sheep. But the announcement of the birth of the Savior startled the shepherds out of their complacency. Off they rushed to see the newborn Savior. And when they had seen him, they returned with joy in their hearts and with praise on their lips. Returned where? To their sheep.

Many of us have been busy with the routine of office or factory or home. Have we turned aside from these tasks long enough to go in spirit to Bethlehem? And has the aura of Christmas sent us back to our daily routine with a new reverence? The shepherds returned to their shepherding glorifying God.

And then there was Herod. The wise men brought to him their inquiries as to where the new King was to be found. New king? Someone to displace Herod? The ruler of Judea had already stained his hands with blood in trying to get rid of rivals to the throne. And those who knew him were sure that they were in for another siege of vengeance. Herod received the news of the Savior's birth with hatred in his heart.

Few of us feel quite that way about Christmas, but are there not many who are a bit resentful at this season? The day has become a burden, and selecting gifts has become a chore. It makes too many demands upon them. It calls for too much sacrifice. A time of joy has been turned into a time of dread.

The wise men, on the other hand, were eagerly looking for the King. They had come far to find him, for there was an emptiness in their hearts that only the finding of the King could fill. Two attitudes are revealed in their actions. They had come to worship, and they had brought their gifts.

The real meaning of Christmas has been found by those who bow their hearts in the presence of the Christ, who have welcomed him into their lives, who have made him their King, and who, out of the fullness of their joy and gratitude, have expressed their love of God in the service of others. It is the spirit of unselfishness in giving that makes Christmas a time of happiness.

What of Mary? After the great Christmas event had passed, she "kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." She was concerned about the real meaning of the coming of Christ.

Are we going to dismiss Christmas with no further thought? Or are we going to ponder over its deeper meanings?

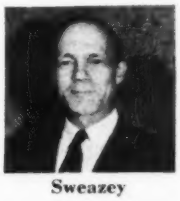
SHOP TALK

The editors of PRESBYTERIAN LIFE are happy to be sharing another anniversary of the world's most important birth with our readers in every part of the earth.

We like to think of the second issue in December as a special Christmas greeting from us to you. This year four of our favorite authors interpret the significance of Christmas and Christian living.

Lowry

Howard Lowry (**Beyond Bethlehem**) is one of the great thinkers and writers of our time. Author of the prophetic book, *The Mind's Adventure* (Westminster, 1950), and former American general editor of the Oxford University Press, Presbyterian layman Lowry has been president of The College of Wooster since 1944. Dr. Lowry is also nationally known as an authority on poet Matthew Arnold and as a forthright defender of the private college.



Sweazey

George Sweazey, now pastor of the Huguenot Memorial Presbyterian Church, Pelham, New York, wrote **The Christian Answer** for the Church's Division of Evangelism when he was secretary of that department. Dr. Sweazey's lively treatment of life's most vital questions has been sent all over the United States and to many foreign countries in booklet form. It has also been reprinted in Spanish for use in Latin America.

Robert McAfee Brown (**The "Return to Religion"—Liability and Opportunity**) teaches at New York's Union Theological Seminary when he isn't writing. Carl G. Karsch (**My Goodest Christmas**) is writing when he isn't taking photographs for PRESBYTERIAN LIFE.

PRESBYTERIAN LIFE

A JOURNAL OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

The Presbyterian

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THE COVER reproduces *The Rest on the Flight into Egypt* by Gerard David. The original painting is on wood and covers a seventeen and three-eighths inch square. Created about 1509, it is one of some fifty of David's works to survive to the present day. *The Rest on the Flight into Egypt* is notable for the rich color harmonies and deeply religious atmosphere. In it the Christ Child is shown with grapes (a symbol of the Lord's Supper). Joseph is in the background beating chestnuts from a tree. The painting is from the National Gallery of Art.

Beyond Bethlehem

"On a certain night in December, all the world's imperfection is as if it had never been. The ancient miracle is renewed in the hearts of men"

By Howard Lowry

"There is a difference," Emerson says, "between one and another hour of life in their authority and subsequent effect." There is a depth, he continues, in certain moments "which constrains us to ascribe more reality to them than to all other experiences."

Christmas, like Good Friday and Easter, is a superb moment of authority in the Christian year. And the genius of such moments is very clear. They return Christianity to itself.

Our faith, because it does embody a profound and high ideal, necessarily knows its disappointments. It falls short of itself in its institutions, in its expressions, in its practice, and in the lives of Christians themselves. The years bring their own erosion, and "heaven's gift takes earth's abatement." The amazing thing, indeed, is that the Church has grown and prospered in the face, not of its enemies, but of its own often imperfect self.

The first Christmas was a long time ago. And, if beyond Bethlehem lies the record of a vast Christian attainment, there lies also much else—the very human short-changing of a divine idea and a divine life. The shadow of ourselves soon moved across our Lord, even in his own time. His first disciples, for all their love of him, misunderstood what Jesus said many a time. They were not immune from doubt, and weariness, and impatience.

Beyond Bethlehem stretches the long history of fat priests and greedy men; of legalism putting ice around the gospel of love and straight-jackets on the shining things of the spirit; of pettiness, jealousy, self-righteousness, and intolerance.

Beyond Bethlehem are the councils and the controversies, the big words that wrapped pure things in cotton wool, the hot words that warped and divided men, dotting *i*'s and crossing *t*'s in blood. There are the tight-lipped, black-robed figures of the inquisition, be it Spain or New England; the emperors and popes warring beneath the banners of God; the long massacres of St. Bartholomew's and other days. There are the ugly harangues over original sin, transubstantiation, and the date of Easter; the blind loggerheads of science and religion; two centuries of the Crusades, turned toward the holy places by faith, fanaticism, and greed; the dark tyrannies of churches over the mind of man; the wild delirium of the cults; the dead decorum of the respectable people.

Beyond Bethlehem are the agonies of doubt and the haunting wistfulness of unbelief, the genuine homelessness and sorrow of those for whom the miracle is stripped of meaning:

Now he is dead! Far hence he lies
In the lorn Syrian town;
And on his grave, with shining eyes,
The Syrian stars look down.

Beyond Bethlehem go the careless, the indifferent, the hard of heart, the stumbling, and the weak—the whole company of the imperfect sons of God.

Beyond Bethlehem go you and I.

And then, on a certain night in December, all this imperfection is as if it had never been. The ancient miracle is renewed in the hearts of men. In the cold and the dark, under the high stars, to the sound of familiar words, and under the dispensation of old memories —to the ringing of bells and the singing of carols, by candle flame and hearth fire, in the bright eyes of young and old, to prayers that rise up out of all the generations—Christianity returns to itself. It stands forth in its pure and vital form, as if it were but an hour ago born. A bolt is shot back in the breasts of men. Their minds fill with the ageless symbols: the manger with its holy light, the shining lady and the luminous Child, the dark figures bearing gifts, the shepherds watching their flocks upon the hills. Out of whatever stillness the

small voice comes, and it speaks of the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. The whole earth seems to be keeping homecoming, and we know the things beyond our telling and the stuff of which life can be made. This is the night, as Alexander Smith saw almost a century ago, to which "all the early world looked forward," and to which "the later world looks back." This is the night that "holds time together."

For beyond Bethlehem, once each year, is Bethlehem itself. Nothing else beyond Bethlehem can cancel that. This is the superb grace of Christmas.

This grace is the deep personal property of every Christian. But it is noteworthy that it belongs also to many who stand outside the Church. They too are touched by its pervading influence. This very fact may be consoling, perhaps to those who deplore the commercialization of the holiday season and lament that there are gifts for all except the One whose birth is being celebrated. In spite of all the bad taste and shoddy materialism from which Christmas and Easter have suffered, they have managed to become a part of the lives of all who live in Christian lands. They have been not wholly unblessed in the way they have been blended into the common calendar and the common thought and life. They are not cloistered rituals, reserved only for those who believe. They are part of the general happiness of human beings; and the gay and often earthy joy they generate, the bright colors that set them up early in the affectionate eyes of children, their worldliness, in short—these are not wasted in the scheme of things. One remembers Charles Lamb's reminder that one sure way to enjoy Christmas was to hear, not a hermit on a desert pillar, but a well-fed English parson singing "Unto us a child is born"—"the rosy-cheeked, ecclesiastical face shining and fragrant with the mince pies of half a century." This alone, he says, "can authenticate the cheerful mystery." Christmas still establishes a bridgehead for Christianity in the world that otherwise it might not have. To this particular occasion you do not have to come. It comes to you. You cannot escape it.

Of the believing Christian, of course, Christmas asks far more than the hearty acceptance of its natural joy. It asks understanding and recommitment. It asks that he renew himself, at the Christmas

Albrecht Dürer's

THE SHEPHERDS

Beyond Bethlehem

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Albrecht Dürer's

THE SHEPHERDS

season, even as Christianity is renewed. And this renewal becomes meaningful only as men realize to what degree Christmas is their birthday as well as the birthday of their Lord.

We rarely encounter anyone who was born on the very same day of the world on which we ourselves were born. In my own time I have met one such man. Quite by accident we found we were exactly the same age. I have since regarded him as a kind of heart-warming phenomenon.

But all Christians share the birthday of Jesus. So much of us was born then. So much of our nature; so much of our world. And there is no better exercise at the Christmas season than to think of how much all this is so.

First of all, at Bethlehem the best we could ever know became real. There was a great Event in history that has changed the face of all life since. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. No longer were the aspirations of life, the quick flashes of our better nature, the dreams of some light amid the dark, but the baseless fancies of mortality. They were the valid truths of living men. For a long time the philosophers had felt the high reaches of the mind. God had spoken at many times and in many forms. But Christianity was not to depend on the noble aspirations of noble men, or on the hopes of philosophers and theologians. It was not to repose on somebody's idea or a poet's vision or some groping toward the brotherhood of men. It was to rest on nothing less than God revealed in human form—the one thing all men could understand, the learned and the illiterate, the young and the old. Christmas was not an idea. It was an Event.

As William Butler Yeats saw, "what was philosophy in the East became in the West biography and drama." And Christmas is the beginning of the highest narrative man has ever heard. It is an Event, or it is nothing.

And with this Event came all the rest —among other things, a new conception of God himself. The God of righteousness and law becomes also the God of love and mercy. There came also new causes to live and fight for, the sense of God's being—as Dr. Henry Van Dusen has perfectly expressed it, "not a problem to be solved, but a Toiler to be joined." There came a new ground of brotherhood, a revolutionary sense of individual worth, a sense that is one of the growing realities of our own time. "The ideal of human dignity as ascribed to *every* individual is now," said Dr. Arthur Compton at a recent conference on science and human responsibility, "a concept of world-wide influence. This concept has, as a matter of fact, become the keystone of the political structure of the free world." Given this concept, he went on to ask, "Where is the motive that will inspire us to cooperative effort, to work freely for each other? The only answer that seems to me adequate is the ancient doctrine of the love of one's neighbor, the heart of Jesus's teaching, and prominent in every religion that is now of major influence. Here is in plain fact precisely what is needed to fit man to live in the world that science is shaping, that he shall love his neighbor with the kind of love that inspires him to help his neighbor live."

With Bethlehem came also an interesting world to live in. It brought rich additions to the color and significance of things. Art, music, and literature received new dimensions as the whole earth became full of His glory.

There came also a new conception of ourselves. In the abiding sense of God, made plain in Jesus Christ, man found a new bond for himself, a new view of his own life. The laws of nature, the created world, people, work, horror, glory, life, and death take on new significance. He has a faith adequate for all living, "both the bright and the dark." He can wait and bide his time, out of a sense of great things worth waiting for. His own sins and failures are capable of mercy and forgiveness. Life is no more a "thing of shreds and patches" but has a divine unity. "Life, law, joy, impulse are one thing." This was the work of Christmas.

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Possessed of so mighty a gift, grounded in such knowledge, Christians have a deep obligation as they deal with the rest of the world. They cannot diminish the good news they have to share with other men. But they can and must approach these men with something of the spirit of their Lord, with understanding and appreciation. The problems of the hour need every ounce of God's help and every glimpse of him that men have caught in all the faiths they have known. We have had a singular genius at times for failing to recognize that God has worked in other places than Bethlehem. We have too often narrowed our education and our culture in terms of the Western world alone. We have not read or understood or appreciated the vast and ancient treasures of other lands. It now happens to be necessary, politically,

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Albrecht Dürer's

THE ADORATION OF THE WISE MEN

ONE wishes sometimes that one of the best of the Christmas carols had been set to music. And yet music does not fit it —perhaps because it is complete in itself. It was the one given long ago to the Romans: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

season, even as Christianity is renewed. And this renewal becomes meaningful only as men realize to what degree Christmas is their birthday as well as the birthday of their Lord.

We rarely encounter anyone who was born on the very same day of the world on which we ourselves were born. In my own time I have met one such man. Quite by accident we found we were exactly the same age. I have since regarded him as a kind of heart-warming phenomenon.

But all Christians share the birthday of Jesus. So much of us was born then. So much of our nature; so much of our world. And there is no better exercise at the Christmas season than to think of how much all this is so.

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Albrecht Dürer's

THE ADORATION OF THE WISE MEN

"My

HARRY REIMEL *(front row, second from left)* joins boys from his cottage in carol singing at Christmas Eve service. Each cottage had its part in the program. After service, Harry spotted his mother, one of a couple dozen parents in audience, rushed to give her an exuberant "Christmas hug" before hurrying to bed.

IGNORING STOCKINGS temporarily, boys kneel for morning prayer. Housemother, two older girls worked most of night filling stockings with toys given by churches.

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY CARL G. KARSCH

Goodest Christmas"

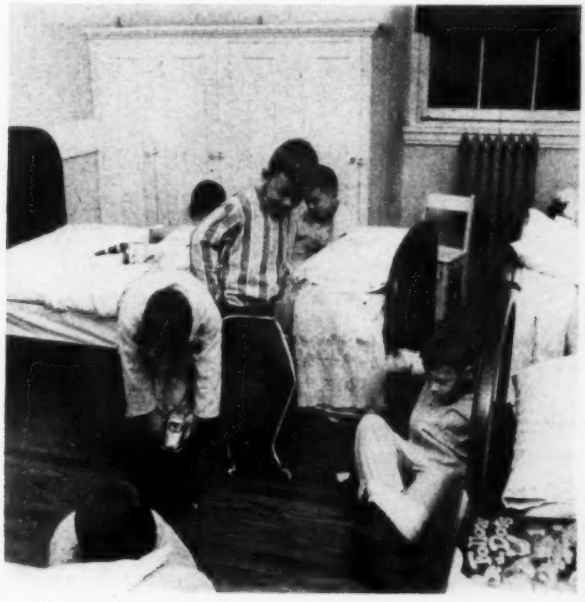
LAST Christmas was the first at the Presbyterian Children's Village, in Philadelphia, for six-year-old Harry Reimel and his three sisters. Harry and the girls—Joyce, seven; Mary, eight; and Charlotte, twelve—together with most of the children at the village were sent there by parents who for one reason or another were unable to keep them.

Within the circle of a dozen boys who lived in Harry's cottage, he soon made friends who helped turn what could have been a dismal Christmas into an exciting adventure. The fun began when he, as one of thirty boys and girls from the village, attended a party given by a Naval air station for children from similar institutions throughout the city. Although he disliked the noise of the crowd, he enjoyed his Navy father-for-an-afternoon. He was surprised to receive the present which he had told the housemother he wished someone would give him: a suitcase to use on occasional trips to see his mother.

Shortly before Christmas, the housemother, Mrs. Marian Overton, (whom the boys call "Mo" because of her initials), took the group downtown to see a pageant at a department store. Arriving late, they sat on willing laps in the audience. Harry invited the woman whose lap he occupied to come to their Christmas Eve service, which she later did. While Mrs. Overton and the boys were eating dinner at an inexpensive restaurant, a street-corner Santa Claus sat down at a rear table. Before Mrs. Overton could stop them, the boys dashed off for a close-up inspection, besieging their "real Santa" with questions and too close scrutiny. He left abruptly, unused to such experiences. "Mo," said Harry as the housemother guided them back to their table, "he wasn't a very jolly Santa."

DUMPING STOCKING on bed, Harry first picks up plastic helicopter, blows hard to make blades whirl. His pal Eddie Kemble *(right)* has come to inspect Harry's collection.

CLIMBING INTO STOCKING, Harry *(center, bending)* prepares for potato-sack race around bedroom with Eddie. Stockings, made of sturdy felt, usually last several years.



ROUTINE of washing, making beds, and breakfast precedes opening of presents. Before breakfast, however, boys were allowed to peek into playroom where gifts were stacked.

FAVORITE PRESENTS, football and cowboy suit, are tried out by Harry and his sister Charotte.

A Day of Surprises . . .

CHRISTMAS was the most thrilling day Harry could remember. After a morning of opening presents sent by his mother and "honorary parents" in a number of Presbyterian churches, he sat down with the boys to a traditional turkey dinner. In the afternoon, when many from the cottage went to visit relatives, Harry and his sisters were invited to the home of a couple whose only child had recently died. There the children had another dinner, opened more presents, and best of all (according to Harry) popped popcorn in an open fireplace, something he had never done. That night, as he was getting ready for bed, Harry confided to Mrs. Overton in a tired voice, "Mo, this was my goodest Christmas."

ABSORBING JOB of setting dining room table falls to Harry on Christmas. Church groups send cards, place favors. One woman supplies holiday turkeys for all the cottages.

THE "Return to Religion" —LIABILITY AND OPPORTUNITY

How shall the Church speak to the increasing numbers of men and women who are within hearing distance?

By Robert McAfee Brown

IT HAS become quite commonplace these days to talk about America's "return to religion." At long last, we are told, America is recapturing a sense of "spiritual values." We are once again becoming "a religious nation."

The evidence for this "return to religion" is presented in a list of reasons as picturesque as it is varied:

Look at all the religious movies *(Salome* or *Quo Vadis,* for example);
Look at the American Legion's "Back to God" movement;
Look at the way Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking* has been on top of the best-seller list for 109 weeks (or is it 199?);
Look at how many people Billy Graham is converting;
Look at our new stamp and pledge of allegiance, both of which mention "God";
Look at the way our national leaders tell us that only belief in God can conquer Communism;
Look at how many politicians are asking for "spiritual reawakening";
Look at the way church attendance is zooming;
Look at the way Arthur Godfrey talks about religion on TV;
Look at how many new churches are being built;
Look at . . . look at . . . the list could go on and on.

Now almost invariably this uneven accumulation of evidence is interpreted as A Good Thing. Religious journals are pleased. Newspapers editorialize favorably. Preachers are happy. Statisticians are impressed. Politicians mention it.

What is the Christian to make of all this? Should one give deep thanks that people are once more "interested in religion," or should one have some second questions and misgivings? Perhaps the alternatives are not mutually exclusive. It is, in fact, my contention that both positive and negative things must be said about this widespread new phenomenon in American life.

Let us try to understand the "double word" by which Christian faith must assess the "return to religion" as something which carries within it both real dangers and real opportunities for the Christian Church. (The negative comments are inadequate without the positive, and the positive comments are inadequate without the negative. Christian faith is a two-edged sword; if it wounds, it does so not merely to wound, but rather to heal.)

One side of the evidence

What, then, are some of the *dangers* in the "return to religion"?

For one thing, religion can become a very convenient dodge word. It can mean almost anything the user wants it to. It has no cutting edge. It is very pliable. Sample definitions of *religion* in this new age of spiritual vitality might run, "Oh, you know, values and all that sort of thing," or perhaps, "Being true to your own highest instincts," or perhaps (more indignantly), "Surely you believe there's Something Greater Than Ourselves, don't you?"

It's all so intangible and so easy. I can make "religion" or "God" or "spiritual values" mean pretty much what I want, with the result that I may not be talking about anything more than a high-minded humanism or a glorified Americanism.

Even more disturbing is the way in which God can be manipulated to serve our ends. The tenuous "religion" to which we have "returned" often looks suspiciously like a gimmick for getting what we want.

The cry in Hollywood is "religion is good box office," which means, among other things, "let's cash in."

A subway poster tells me, "Go to church—you'll feel better." But maybe I shouldn't feel better every time I go to church. Maybe I ought occasionally to feel a lot worse, or a lot more conscious of my sin and my neglected responsibilities, and not just receive a soothing little pat on the spiritual back.

"Worship God," I am told on the radio and by the politicians. Why? Because God is supremely worshipful, and this is important no matter what happens to me? No. Worship God, they tell me, so we can all lick Communism. "God" is apparently a kind of superduper secret weapon to be thrown at the Commies.

"Pray!" the religious best-sellers tell me. Why? Because this is both my humble duty and opportunity for living close to God, come what may? No. Pray, I read, because it is a dandy device for making myself a successful high-powered executive. Not only will I be able to sleep well at night, and get rid of my ulcers, but I'll be able to triple my income.

Another consequence of much of the "religion" to which we have "returned" is that it has no sense of judgment. It is genuinely alarming, to me at any rate, to note how frequently our national obeisances to God are made in a self-congratulatory mood. The notion that we are a nation "under God" *ought* to be a terrifying, not a smug, notion. It is an idea which should inspire penitence rather than complacency. Instead of being the prelude to new paeans of praise for America, it should make us more deeply critical of ourselves than we have ever been before. And it is disturbing that the "back to God" idea should take fire at precisely the time when we are most prone to flaunt our Americanism at the rest of the world, and to find greatest difficulty in remaining at peace with our "neighbors," let alone our "enemies." It is a sad thing that some of the most muscular exponents of the "religious revival" seem sure that God is the exclusive property of the United States of America.

These are just a few of the reasons why we must be willing to take a second look at the "return to religion." For these are liabilities rather than assets. And it is the particular responsibility of the Christian to be on his guard against things which may appear to be strengthening his faith, when in point of fact they may be weakening it.

The other side of the picture

But that, of course, can never be the whole story. It is never enough just to raise questions or take second looks or be caustic. That may be part of the task of the Christian as he tries to survey his world in the light of the gospel. But there is always an obligation to go beyond that.

We have to go beyond it by asking ourselves, "How can the Church meet the 'return to religion' creatively?" We may not be able to do a great deal about Hollywood, or television, or politicians who invoke the name of God too glibly. But we can, presumably, do something about the Church. Perhaps the most constructive attitude, as we face a new year, would be to say, "The churches are filled. People are coming (and we must not be too quick to impugn their motives). *They are within hearing distance. What message are we going to give them?*"

This is not a question just for the minister or the session. This is a question for every church member, for every person who helps to make up the corporate expression of Christian life which is the Church. And the way in which we answer this question will determine whether or not America's "return to religion" becomes increasingly superficial or increasingly profound.

Perhaps we can best answer this question in the context of another question: What is the Church? And the "return to religion" ought to make us very wary of an easy and superficial answer to that question. If our answer to that question is faithful to the Christian heritage, then we can have some assurance that our message in the "return to religion" era will be valid.

So let us not offer the easy answer that the Church is just a club where one can meet "nice people," or a service organization doing good works. No, let us answer that the Church is the fellowship of those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord.

Now those particular words may have a kind of dreary familiarity to you. You have heard them so many times. But what actually do they mean? This much-abused word *fellowship* originally meant, in the New Testament Church, a community of sharing, of cooperation, of mutual concern. And this is actually one of the most significant and exciting notions that could ever break its way into twentieth-century life. In a day when people are lonely and isolated from their fellow men, when nations are cut off from nations, the Christian Church says (or should be saying) that there is a fellowship in Christ which transcends all man-created barriers and bounds, whether they be of race or of nation or of the exclusiveness which is bred in modern apartment-house existence. It is a fellowship that is as wide as the ends of the earth. That is to say, no one who acknowledges the Lordship of Christ is to be denied a place in the community.

And the Church, if it is to be faithful to its message, will have to make this sense of corporateness and sharing more a part of its life in the future than it has done in the past. Someone has remarked, for example, that racial barriers are breaking down so fast in America that it may soon be true that the only places where Negroes are unwelcome will be in middle-class Protestant churches and in a number of church-related colleges. That such a statement could be made is not an indictment of Christian faith, but it is a very severe indictment of the flabby and evasive way in which many Christians distort their faith.

But the Church does not just parade "fellowship." "Fellowship" can be found in many places. The important thing about a community or a fellowship is that to which (or to Whom) supreme allegiance is given by the members of the fellowship. A political party can create community out of the struggle to elect its candidates to office. The Nazis created community out of the dream of a Third Reich and the extermination of the Jews. Some so-called "churches" create community out of a humanistic, pat-on-the-back religion and a "gospel" which says no more than "be true to yourself." But the Christian Church proclaims a particular kind of fellowship or community—that which is found in allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

These, too, are very familiar words. And without going into a long theological discussion, we can at least indicate that by them we are saying that the Christian Church is that community in which the members acknowledge that, in Jesus Christ, God visited man, participated in the life of man, died for all men, and was raised from the dead to be the final Lord of life and death. To the Christian this is the supremely

important fact of all life. It is the fact which "makes" the Church, and which remakes the members of the Church.

This, then, is the heart of the Church's life and proclamation. This is the "good news," which is what our word *gospel* really means. It is good news because it changes everything. It changes how we look at life, how we look at death, how we look at ourselves, how we look at our neighbors, how we look at politics, how we look at "religion." Because it is true, we have an ultimate confidence about life that is unshakable. (In case you still wonder about the real source of that confidence, you might take a long look at Romans 8:35-39.)

But—and this is the important thing in the "return to religion" era—in the process of being "good news," it must not be transformed into cheap and easy sentimentality. The good news is always two-edged. It is good news, indeed, that we are rescued from our wrongdoing by God himself, but it is bad news, even shattering news, to discover that we need to be rescued in the first place, that we are guilty of wrongdoing, of (to put it bluntly) sin. The good news and the bad news must somehow go together. And the greatest danger, perhaps, that faces all of us within the Church during the era of the "return to religion" is that we will water down this good news, that we will sell the gospel short, that we will talk about victory without talking about struggle, about new life without sin, about redemption without corruption, about Christ without the Cross, about Christian life without crosses. We need to remember that Christian faith does not put its blessing on us "the way we are."

It demands change

THE first words of Jesus which are recorded in our gospels give us a kind of summary of his message. What was it? He did not say, "Come now, you're a very admirable person, just be a tiny bit more admirable, and God will smile upon you. Keep up the good work." He said, "Repent," which is a quite different word, meaning, "Turn about!" "Begin again!" "Get a fresh start!"—all of which tells us very forcibly that we've been going off on the wrong tack and that only by the power of God can we start off on a new one.

Now that is very disturbing. It is not the kind of thing we like to hear. It is not "comforting." It does not let us remain complacent. And in a day when religious complacency is liable to be the Number One temptation to an organized church as big and successful as ours, we need to take particularly to heart such words as those of T. S. Eliot:

Why should men love the Church?
Why should they love her laws?
She tells them of Life and Death, and
of all that they would forget.
She is tender where they would be
hard, and hard where they like to
be soft.
She tells them of Evil and Sin, and
*other unpleasant facts.**

The Church is not, then, just a "mirror" of the rest of our life and culture. It is not just a reflection of the "natural man." It is a witnessing community which must say, and live out the fact, that because of what God has done in Jesus Christ, men's lives can be transformed.

G. K. Chesterton, in the paradoxical manner so typical of him, once spoke of "the good news of original sin." What he meant by this, I think, was that we can bear to hear the truth about ourselves, which is that we do corrupt and stain all that we try to do by our tendency to put ourselves in the center of things—we can bear to hear this truth about ourselves because there is another word also, the word that God has taken steps to heal us. This word is not just a secondhand word that somebody tells us, it is a living word, a Word (as the Fourth Gospel reminds us) "made flesh," the creative and active power of God coming into our lives with healing power through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And it is a fact to which countless generations of Christians have witnessed, that when he is accepted as Lord of life, life *is* changed; that where he is acknowledged, rather than some other "lord," new springs of creative action *do* flow. And the Church at its best will witness to this fact today. The Church at its second-best will fail to witness to this fact and will proclaim some other "lord," such as self-sufficiency or a too easily achieved peace of mind.

Let the Church, then, in this new year ahead, truly be the *Church*, the group of those "called out" (which is what the Greek word for *church* really means), those "called out" by God to witness to the redemptive activity of God in transforming and remaking human life.

If the Church can recover a kind of fidelity to that message, then we may hope that it will be equipped to speak to the era of the "return to religion" and to make a contribution which will be positive and lasting. Some people will be driven away, as they discover that they are not prepared to accept "religion" if it is in the radical terms in which Christian faith states it. That is not unlikely. Our Lord said on many occasions that people would be "offended" by him. But if some are driven away, others will be drawn more fully in, not by "us," not by our ministers, but solely by the power of the gospel, which we all exist to serve.

*From "The Rock," Collected Poems, pages 196-7, Harcourt, Brace and Company. Used by permission.

Christmas Aftersong

The angels have taken
Their homeward way
Talking of all they have seen this day;

Shepherds, Wise Men,
Child of Light!
And Mary's eyes that were so bright.

Stable and manger,
Ox in stall,
And Joseph's wonder at it all,

Curious folk
From the Inn nearby,
And the signal Star in the deep,
dark sky.

The angels talked
Of these many things,
Flying Home on their wide, strong
wings;

And they sang this song
As they swept along;
It is echoed today by a happy throng:

Unto you is born,
Unto you is given,
All the Joy of earth
All the Bliss of heaven;
Lean to the Child and you will see
The hands of God take hold on thee!

—EDWARD WILLIAMS

NEWS

Christmas, 1954: "Ease in Zion"

There was no question about it. The churches of the world were making certain this year that there would be more Christianity and less "commercialanity" in the 1954th anniversary of the birth of Jesus. This was especially true in the United States, but the idea has now spread afar.

In Germany, Christmas cards from "Heaven" are no longer being sent. The postoffice in Himmel (that's "heaven" in German) has been closed by authorities who said churchmen had objected to commercialization of the "Himmel" postmark. In past years thousands of Germans sent all their Christmas cards in great bundles to Himmel for postmarking.

In the United States, scores of towns and cities have held their first annual religious parades in an attempt "to put Christ back into Christmas." Scores of additional communities have repeated parades started in 1952 and 1953. More religious Christmas cards are being sent this year than ever before in history.

But is all this activity and other activity like it a real measure of one's Christian belief? At the meeting of the National Council of Churches which ended earlier this month in Boston, serious thought was given to this question.

The Council came to grips with this query in a 6,500-word document entitled *The State of the Churches.* The document was prepared by the National Council's chief staff officers, General Secretary Roy G. Ross and Associate General Secretary Roswell Barnes.

The report stated that there was great statistical progress among churches. There were more members than ever before, more money raised, and a "tidal wave" of children in the Sunday schools. There was also more awareness of the idea of church cooperation and more interest in church work on the part of laymen. And churches were more and more becoming aware of their responsibilities in social matters.

But, the report warned, "We must guard against a confidence derived from prosperity as measured by the standards of contemporary American society. Popular success is a great spiritual hazard. . . . Woe to them that are at ease in Zion. . . ."

The State of the Churches survey also brought out the fact that "our crime rate appears to rise alongside our rate of membership increase." It mentioned the tremendous problems Christians face in combatting delinquency, corruption, and Communism. And it stated, "We seem to be moving toward an American culture where the only major segregated institution left will be the Church."

"Are we better people because more of us belong to churches?" the report asked. "Would a census of our good deeds show a rising curve to parallel our increase in membership?" In the joyous and glorious days of the Christmas season, these were questions indeed to ponder *(see* **The "Return to Religion"—Liability and Opportunity,** *page 14).*

Dr. Blake Visits Troops on Korea Front

Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, newly-elected president of the National Council of Churches and Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian General Assembly, will spend Christmas Day with the armed forces in Korea.

Dr. Blake is accompanied by the Reverend Robert H. Heinze, associate general manager of PRESBYTERIAN LIFE. They left early this month for a three-week Christmas tour of Pacific and Far East military installations.

On December 7, Dr. Blake was the featured speaker at the traditional Pearl Harbor Day ceremonies on the deck of the half-submerged battleship *Arizona.* Brief visits are also being made to troops stationed in Okinawa, the Philippines, and Japan.

Drs. Blake and Heinze are following the approximate route taken last Christmas by the then-president of the National Council, Bishop William C. Martin.

Presbyterian Union: Decision in January?

The question of unity for the three major branches of Presbyterianism in the United States will probably be decided next month. In January the schedule of stated winter presbytery meetings begins, at which time votes will be taken on the Plan of Union approved early last summer by the three General Assemblies. Under the terms of the union proposals, two-thirds of the presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. and United Presbyterian Church must give an affirmative vote for the plan to be returned to the 1955 General Assemblies. In the Presbyterian Church U.S., however, a three-fourths affirmative vote is required.

This larger margin needed in the southern church weakens considerably the chances of union. Of the eighty-four presbyteries, eleven have already voted against union. One has voted in favor. Under the terms of the Plan of Union, negative votes by eleven more presbyteries would defeat present negotiations.

Even if union is not voted this year, it will come eventually, believes a former Moderator of the U.S. Church who is chairman of a group supporting the Plan of Union. Dr. Frank W. Price said last month that union is "inevitable—the only question is the day it will come." Efforts will continue, he said, "until the three bodies are consolidated and we are an undivided church for witness and service to our nation and the whole world. To this end we are dedicated."

The Church and Relief: New Windsor's Wardrobes

Out of America's attics and clothes closets last month came most of next winter's "wardrobe" for the world's refugees.

Early tabulations from Church World Service's five U.S. processing centers indicated the supply of suits, overcoats, dresses, and shoes for destitute people in a dozen critical areas would be at a near record high.

In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for example, the big red tractor-trailer had to make three trips from the warehouse at New Windsor, Maryland, to cover a collection route ordinarily producing only two loads. On each trip the truck picked up 15,000 pounds of used clothing, the result of a well-organized drive by Philadelphia church women cooperating through the city's Council of Churches. Last year they brought 125,000 pounds of clothes to thirty churches in the area serving as pick-up points for the Church World Service truck.

In the seven-state area served by the Maryland center, the pattern last month was the same: church women hard at work through their local councils of

churches to assure a steady stream of good used clothing for refugees overseas.

New Windsor is the largest and oldest of the five receiving centers for clothes processed by Church World Service, the material aid agency of the National Council of Churches. The others are located at Nappanee, Indiana; St. Louis, Missouri; Oakland, California; and New York City. New Windsor last year sent overseas more than three-and-a half million pounds of clothes, bedding, and yard goods. Since operations began in 1946, it has processed almost twenty-eight million pounds.

The actual sorting, cleaning, and baling operations are carried on in the small gymnasium of a former college of the Church of the Brethren, one of the denominations that helped initiate Church World Service. Young people training for overseas projects sponsored by the Church of the Brethren do most of the work, occasionally assisted by groups of women who travel as much as a hundred miles to put in a day's work at the center.

At New Windsor warehouse, volunteer workers load Church World Service truck with 15,000 pounds of baled clothing for shipment to overseas distribution centers.

The floor-to-ceiling pile of unprocessed clothing in the gymnasium is small compared to the thousands of pounds in a large quonset-type warehouse near the station. Biggest accumulations are in the spring and fall, coinciding with seasonal housecleaning. Bales of cleaned, sorted garments are also stored in the warehouse before being sent to Baltimore and then to ports around the world.

Shipments are made to overseas distribution points according to the quantities and types of clothing requested by Church World Service representatives. Every bale is stamped with a code describing its contents. The code notes whether the items are for men, women, or children and if the garments are for winter or summer wear.

Although the center receives more women's clothes, greatest need is for men's and children's garments. Raymond Kyle, who is in charge of the center, urges donors to make certain clothing is clean and in wearable condition. About one fourth of the material received at New Windsor needs mending. Some months as much as 10 per cent of it has to be sold as rags. Church people, suggests Mr. Kyle, should be guided by the sign in the sorting room which helps the staff determine which garments can be shipped—"Would You Wear It?"

Mr. Kyle also recommends that shoes, gloves, and socks be pinned or tied together in pairs, and that women send only low-heeled shoes suitable for life in refugee camps.

The continued support of the clothing program is one of the outstanding success stories of united Protestantism. Begun in 1946, the project grew so rapidly that only two years later Church World Service reported eight million pounds had been collected in the previous twelve months. Contributions have remained at a high rate and this year are expected to reach five million pounds. Since the start of the program, Church World Service has shipped to refugees clothing valued at nearly forty-two million dollars.

The worth of these gifts can never be estimated accurately in human terms. Perhaps some indication can be gained from the remark of a Church World Service worker who recently toured the New Windsor center on a visit to the United States. He said: "I've seen thousands of people who are alive today because of the activity in these buildings."

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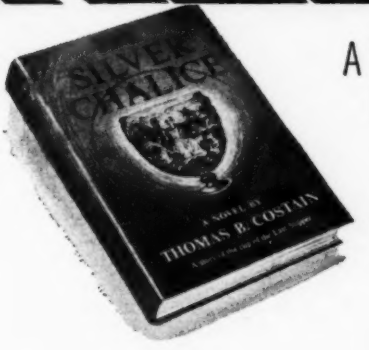

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At meeting of public relations sub-committee, Wendell Beck first met other delegates for discussion and action. International affairs sessions came later.

The World Council: From Assembly to Pew

Last month an extremely dignified group of gentlemen—all of them nationally if not internationally known—met in Paris, France, for learned discussions. It was the French Academy of Moral and Political Sciences. And chief among the topics before it was a report on the ecumenical movement made by the Academy's observer in Geneva, Switzerland, headquarters of the World Council of Churches.

In October, forty-four Iowa college students met on a farm over a brisk weekend to grapple with the implications of the World Council's Evanston Assembly theme: "Christ—the Hope of the World." The group belonged to the Westminster Fellowship of Iowa State College at Ames. On hand as guest leaders were two youth consultants to the World Council, Leon Malan of South Africa and Hester Jason from the Philippines. Two of the Iowa students—Robert Hanson and Shirley Jane Smith—had also attended a number of the Evanston Assembly sessions.

Both of these incidents—untypical as they might be—show the great range of coverage given to news of the ecumenical movement and the Evanston Assembly of the World Council in particular. But the most important question to ecumenical leaders and enthusiasts was: "Is the news about the World Council seeping down to the average person in the pew?"

One man doing his level best to see that the church people in his area know about the World Council and Evanston is a stocky, young-looking California pastor by the name of J. Wendell Beck.

Wendell is an ecumenical oddity. One of the most serious criticisms of the World Council's Evanston Assembly was that too many church administrators and theologians were delegates, and not enough local parish ministers. Mr. Beck, forty-two-year-old former Korea chaplain, is pastor of the 400-family First Presbyterian Church of Redlands, California. He was also a duly elected (by the General Assembly) delegate of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. to the Evanston Assembly. And he hasn't forgotten that fact for a minute.

The Nebraska-born minister—as one of the few pastor-delegates to Evanston—began his transmission of World Council information last July when he prepared three sermons on the Assembly main theme. Then he left California with his family (wife, Louise; daughter Gwynethe, fifteen; and sons Royce, thirteen, and Robert, twelve) for a cross-country motor trek to Illinois and the East (the Becks sandwiched Evanston in the middle of their vacation).

At Evanston, the family split up, Dad going to live in a sorority house, vacated for delegates, while the other Becks located in a Wilmette, Illinois, motor court. Later, through the kindness of David Cassat, Presbyterian Men's president, and Charles T. Albers, former Assembly Vice-Moderator, the Becks were able to move into Evanston's handsome Northwestern Apartments. Here the Beck children rode elevators with the Archbishop of Canterbury, and were befriended by a Coptic bishop from Ethiopia. Wendell, with work to do on the Public Information Committee and the sub-theme section on International Affairs, saw his family occasionally and managed to garner some foreign stamps for his sons.

In September the continent-crossing Becks arrived at the manse in Redlands. On September 12, Wendell spoke at a union service of the local council of churches. On the 13th, he talked to the Redlands Mariners Club and guests. Ten days later he addressed an out-of-town ministerial association. And on the 28th, he appeared before the Post-Evanston Conference of the Pasadena Council of Churches. And he's averaged at least two engagements a week since that time on World Council business. In addition, he has used Evanston material in most of his preaching and has several times shown slides of film he took.

Even as far away as mid-1955, Wendell will be working to spread the ecumenical word. As chairman of the Synod of California's Ecumenical Relations Committee, he hopes to present Evanston information at the Synod's meeting next summer. He has also held, or is planning, several dozen ecumenical discussion sessions for students at the University of Redlands and the members of the Westminster Fellowship of his congregation.

What are the people in the pews asking about the ecumenical movement and the Evanston Assembly? After three months of intensive work on the subject, Wendell Beck has this to report: Large numbers of church members are aware of and interested in the World Council and the interchurch movement. This is particularly true of Presbyterians. And people are not afraid to ask questions.

In the weeks just after the Evanston Assembly, the most frequently asked question was, "What about those delegates from behind the Iron Curtain?" Wendell usually says that in his conversations with those delegates, he could find no reason for condemning them. "It was not my place to sit in judgment of them."

Another often-asked question is: "Do you think there was any important or lasting progress?" The Californian says yes, especially in the "encounter of delegate with delegate" in talk, work, and worship.

"How come there wasn't just one Communion service?" many people ask Wendell Beck. He says, "This question always surprises me a little. The World Council is not a church; therefore it has no order, no ministry, no liturgy. The Sacrament of Holy Communion could only be administered to the delegates by a particular church group. It seems to me that at such a great gathering there should be more than one Communion service. I hope that by the next meeting, all these services will be 'open.'"

Another question asked many times is: "Why is there so much division of opinion within the World Council?" Wendell says, "The so-called 'divisions and differences' were generally played up in the secular press, but in the sections and committees, we were not conscious of them. To me the miracle of Evanston was that when we talked about the basic beliefs of Christians, there was no division but rather a oneness in Christ."

The Redlands pastor says also of his ecumenical experience, "One of the most meaningful things to me was being a member of the Evanston Assembly's section on International Affairs. That is where we got down to cases—delegate encountering delegate. That job has given me the feeling that I had something to do in a concrete way with the total Assembly. When I made my first remarks in the section, I remember suggesting that we use the phrase, 'living together in a divided world,' instead of the term, 'co-existence.' Dr. O. Frederick Nolde used this in his Assembly speech; but after I had made my pitch in the section meeting, the Bishop of Chichester picked it up and that phrase was finally used in the Assembly report."

But this energetic pastor from south-central California need never worry about his contribution to the ecumenical movement. He is doing his most effective work where it counts the most—in the congregation.

The Church in India: Search for New Leaders

In their relatively short period of independence, Indians have worked hard learning how to operate extensive industrial enterprises and manage the governmental functions of one of the world's principal countries. For India's Christians there has been an added task: to understudy foreign missionaries so that they could assume the management of the schools, hospitals, and other institutions developed by Christians from other countries.

An indication of how quickly they have proved themselves came last month with the announcement that two Indian pastors have been selected for executive positions in the mission of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.

A former principal of a training school for village teachers is to be the executive secretary of the Punjab Synodical Boards. He is the Reverend Sudhir Kumar Roy, a graduate of the Agricultural Institute at Allahabad. Under Mr. Roy's leadership, the training school, located in the town of Moga, became one of the most important centers for educating instructors for village schools.

The Reverend Benjamin N. Lall, who developed a new plan for training local Christian leaders, has been appointed executive secretary of the North India Synodical Board. Following his ordination, Mr. Lall established a number of

Wendell adds to his color film coverage before Eisenhower's Assembly speech.

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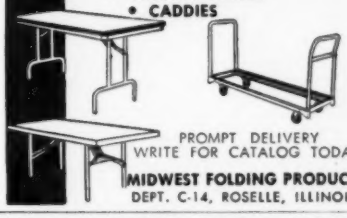

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- **The Camel and the Needle's Eye.** A study guide for *Ethics in a Business Society*, by Marquis Childs and Douglass Cater (35c). This will be especially appropriate for use during the Church and Economic Life Week, January 16 to January 22. 30c.

- **The Cross Is Lifted,** by Chandran Devanesen. These inspiring poems from India may be read for personal enjoyment and meditation and used in worship services. Cloth, $1.50; paper, $1.00.

- **Twelve Rules for Christian Living.** An answer to the criticism that the Church does not give guidance in "how" to be a Christian. To instruct new church members and to inspire old ones. 2c.

- **City Chronicle.** Church Family Nights are due shortly, so now is the time to order copies of *City Chronicle*, which is set up like a newspaper. Everybody can buy and take home a copy. Stories, news, pictures fill its twelve pages about Presbyterian work: McKim Center in Baltimore, New York's Labor Temple, a Cincinnati parish, for example. Suggested activities, menus, decorations. Price: 10c; 25 or more, each 5c, so the church may resell if desired.

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itinerant schools for training Christian couples who, in turn, visited villages to develop local church leadership.

A third Indian Christian, Miss Sybil Bailey, has been elected a member of the New York executive staff of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. Miss Bailey, formerly principal of a girls' school in North India, will keep local churches in the United States in close touch with congregations in countries where the Board of Foreign Missions is represented. An elder in the United Church of Northern India, she is a graduate of Isabella Thoburn College, Lucknow. During the past year she has studied at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago.

Henry Sloane Coffin

Henry Sloane Coffin: Presbyterian Crusader

Late last month death came quietly to one of the monumental figures in the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin. President-emeritus of Union Theological Seminary, former pastor of New York City's Madison Avenue Church, and former Moderator of the General Assembly, Dr. Coffin passed away at his home in Lakeville, Connecticut. He would have been seventy-eight on January 5.

Like his former colleagues, preacher-author-diplomat Dr. Henry Van Dyke and missions-leader Dr. Robert E. Speer, Henry Coffin did many things well. He was not only a famous preacher, educator, and lecturer but also a noted author, an outstanding pastor, and a hardworking civic leader. But the New York-born churchman will probably be remembered longest as a crusading prophet of church unity and social reform.

Dr. Coffin was one of the first men in the twentieth century to advocate Protestant unity. The gradual drawing together of America's Protestant churches during the past generation is a tribute to the work of leaders like Dr. Coffin. When he was president of Union Seminary (1926-1942), he did much to foster reunion between the U.S.A. and U.S. Presbyterian Churches. He also led a movement to unite the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. and the Protestant Episcopal Church.

In the field of social reform, Dr. Coffin was a strong supporter of racial integration, free speech, and more recognition of the rights of the laboring man. Stands on these subjects often embroiled him in controversies. Dr. Coffin was also known as a theological "liberal," which also led him into arguments. But more often than not his stands were vindicated by the passage of time.

In its early days, the Presbyterian Church's now-famous Labor Temple in New York was attacked by many as being too radical a departure for a church. Dr. Coffin defended it and saw it become one of the Church's major mission projects.

When he became pastor of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, he noted that the congregation supported a chapel for people in neighborhoods east of the church proper. After he was convinced that the chapel was kept open only because its members were not considered good enough for the church, he persuaded the congregation to close the chapel and welcome everybody to Madison Avenue. In his twenty-one years at Madison Avenue (1905-26), membership increased from 450 to 2,300.

In 1941, Dr. Coffin was nominated for Moderator of the General Assembly. But that spring he had another matter on his mind. He was worried about the war in Europe, and in particular, about the terrible beating Great Britain was taking. He fought on the floor of the Assembly to have the Church support aid to Britain. He won this crusade but was defeated for the Moderatorship. Two years later he was elected.

In his long and distinguished career Dr. Coffin received many honors. At the age of thirty-three, he gave one of the major addresses at the Edinburgh Missionary Conference. This meeting first brought together the men who founded the World Council of Churches. In 1918, he gave the famed Lyman Beecher Lectures at his alma mater, Yale University. And more than fifteen colleges and universities, including Germany's University of Marburg; General Theological Seminary (Episcopal); the Jewish Theological Seminary; and Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, presented him with honorary degrees.

But honor was one reward that Dr. Coffin took calmly. His greatest rewards have and will come through realization of the rights and the ideas for which he crusaded.

For the Record

ANNIVERSARIES:

One hundred seventieth. The New Providence Presbyterian Church, McAfee, Kentucky.

One hundred fiftieth. First Presbyterian Church, New Carlisle, Ohio (the Reverend J Elliot Peirce Morrison, pastor).

Sixty-fifth. First Presbyterian Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (the Reverend C. Ralston Smith, pastor).

Fortieth. The Itasca Presbyterian Church, Superior, Wisconsin (the Reverend Harvey J. Smith, pastor).

Tenth. The Presbyterian Institute of Industrial Relations, Chicago, Illinois.

January Broadcasts

"**Thy Kingdom Come**"—Scripture readings and a wonderful brass choir—NBC Radio.

John Sutherland Bonnell—drama of Christian counseling on "**Pilgrimage**" of ABC Radio.

"Chuck" Templeton urges youth outside the Church to "**Look Up and Live**"—CBS Television.

E. Fay Campbell and the Princeton Seminary Choir observe Seminary Sunday, January 9, on the CBS "**Church of the Air.**"

Ask local stations about date and time—then publicize.

DEDICATIONS:

The Presbyterian Church, Eureka Springs, Arkansas (the Reverend G. William Barnum, pastor), of a baptismal font given by Mr. and Mrs. Oscar A. Sabom in memory of the Reverend Fenton Carlyle Jones, a former pastor.

Blackburn College, Carlinville, Illinois, of a new Student Center, a gift from Mr. C.H.C. Anderson of Dallas, Texas, in memory of his parents.

Trinity Church, Presbyterian, Natick, Massachusetts (the Reverend John D. McDowell, pastor), of a new Fellowship Center.

St. Charles, Missouri. The Presbyterian Church of St. Charles (the Reverend Thomas C. Cannon, pastor), and the Chapel of Lindenwood College (the Reverend T. A. Gill, Dean), joined together in dedicating ground on which a church will be built.

Holland Presbyterian Church, Milford, New Jersey (the Reverend Frederick W. Christiansen, pastor), of an annex to the church. The fiftieth anniversary of Miss Kathyrn Moore's service as organist was also celebrated.

Brunswick Presbyterian Church, R.D., Troy, New York (the Reverend Edward

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W. Hargrave, pastor), of an addition. At the ceremony the mortgage was burned.

First Presbyterian Church, Akron, Ohio (the Reverend Paul L. McKay, pastor), of the remodeled sanctuary.

The Coitsville Presbyterian Church, Youngstown, Ohio (the Reverend Delbert R. Poling, pastor), of a new sanctuary and a Christian education unit.

Eastminster Presbyterian Church, Columbus, Ohio (the Reverend John W. Stump, pastor), of a new church.

First Presbyterian Church, Grandfield, Oklahoma (the Reverend Campbell G. Long, pastor), of the redecorated sanctuary and manse.

Westminster Presbyterian Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (the Reverend G. Raymond Campbell, pastor), of a thirty-five-bell carillon, a gift of Mr. and Mrs. George P. Benson.

First Presbyterian Church, Medford, Oregon (the Reverend D. Kirkland West, pastor), of a twenty-five-bell carillon, a gift from Mrs. Callie Palm.

The Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church, Washington, D.C. (the Reverend J. H. Boelens, pastor), of a pulpit in memory of the Reverend Lester V. Bauguess, a former pastor.

Manito Presbyterian Church, Spokane, Washington (the Reverend Evert Top, pastor), of the second unit of the church school building.

First Presbyterian Church, Ottawa, R. 1, Dousman, Wisconsin (the Reverend Leo Duerson, pastor), of a new addition. The remodeled sanctuary was rededicated.

The Presbyterian Church, North Bend, Wisconsin (the Reverend Robert L. Thaden, pastor), of memorial gifts of numerous church appointments.

CORNERSTONE LAYINGS:

Greenfield Presbyterian Church, Berkley, Michigan (the Reverend Charles W. Bates, pastor), of a social hall and additional facilities.

Pilgrim Presbyterian Church, Trenton, New Jersey (the Reverend Herbert H. Hunsberger, pastor), of a new Christian education building and chancel.

First Presbyterian Church, Sebring, Ohio (the Reverend Roland L. Showalter, pastor), of a new Christian education building.

NEW CHURCH ORGANIZED:

Thornton, Colorado. Plans call for the purchase of a manse and three acres of ground.

GROUNDBREAKING:

First Presbyterian Church, Raton, New Mexico (the Reverend J. Frederick Speer, pastor), for an addition to the church school.

Of People and Places

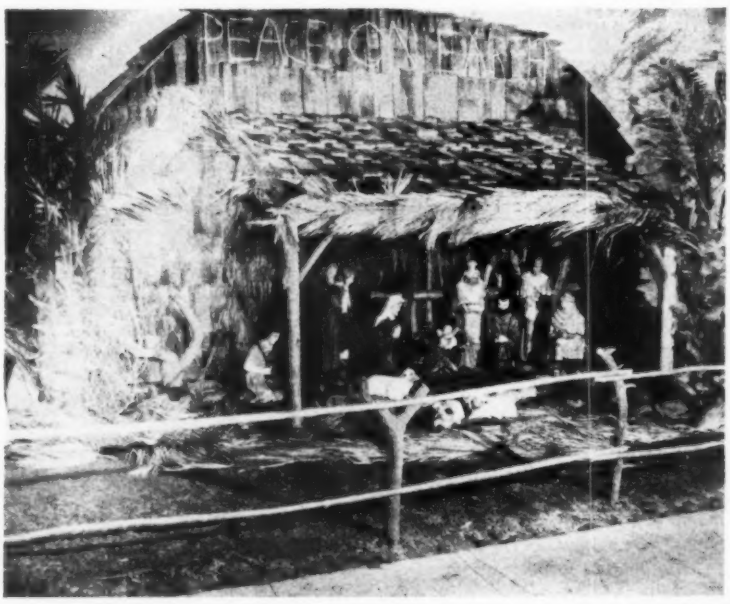
● **Septuagenarians feted.** The First Presbyterian Church of **Brighton, Colorado** (the Reverend J. Whitfield Sloan, pastor), recently honored members seventy years of age and older. Twenty-one in this category were present for the evening's program. The ladies were presented corsages; the men, old-fashioned candies. A highlight of the evening was the presentation of a purse to Mr. Kim Contor in appreciation of his services as director of First Church's choir.

● **Nonagenarian active churchwoman.** Mrs. William Bradford Preston, widow of a Presbyterian minister, last month passed her ninetieth birthday. She is much in demand as a speaker in Presbyterian circles and attends meetings all over the country. Her summers are spent in New York, Connecticut, and New Hampshire, and her winters in Texas. At eighty-five, Mrs. Preston was elected an elder of Trinity Presbyterian Church of **Dallas.** She has four daughters, two sons, ten grandchildren, and ten great-grandchildren.

● **Navy chaplain is now captain.** The Reverend Harry Clinton Wood, Presbytery of **Parkersburg, West Virginia,** was recently selected for promotion to the rank of captain in the Chaplains Corps, United States Navy. Chaplain Wood entered the service in 1939 and saw combat duty with both the Navy and Marine Corps during World War II.

● **Generous response for UNICEF.** Two years ago the Junior High Westminster Fellowship of the First Presbyterian Church, **Fort Morgan, Colorado** (the Reverend Frank L. McCormick, pastor), spearheaded a Halloween campaign in its community for donations to provide milk for needy children in foreign lands. Other church groups were quick to cooperate in the project for the United Nations International Children's Fund. This year, young people from the Baptist, Disciples of Christ, Methodist, Nazarene, Presbyterian, and United Presbyterian Churches of Fort Morgan conducted the canvass. A total of $414.12 was collected in the fund drive.

● **Books for Africa.** The Council of Presbyterian Men of Westminster Presbyterian Church, **Akron, Ohio** (the Reverend William F. MacCalmont, pastor), recently sponsored a "Books for Africa" campaign. Three thousand pounds of books were collected, packed, and shipped to Brooklyn, New York. They will be sent to Africa to augment the mobile library in Lagos, Nigeria.



● The **West Hollywood (California)** Presbyterian Church (the Reverend Bertil Von Norman, pastor) has erected again this year a nearly life-sized Nativity scene on the front lawn of the church. Last December it was estimated that more than one million persons saw the display. This year a motor-driven dimmer is being used to create a dawn-to-evening lighting effect. Various combinations of amber floodlights are used during daylight hours. Blue floods are utilized for the evening cycle.

The Christian Answer

—to Life's Urgent Problems

By George E. Sweazey

I. Who Am I?

You can begin your search for truth by looking at yourself. Put yourself before a mirror and ask who it is that is looking back at you. You see there a body of bone and tissue, physically enough like the animals that a good veterinary can serve you if you can find no other doctor. But back of those eyes you are staring into there is something else. The questioning, puzzled, half-amused look you see there puts you face to face with the fact of personality, and gives you an awed glimpse into the mysteries of the spirit.

"Who am I?" That is the first question of religion—and of practical daily living. You cannot decide what you want to do or to have or to be until you have some idea who you are. You have no way to make your daily decisions until you have some notion of what life is all about. In other words—you have to have religion.

It is religion because it has to be based on faith. What you believe about yourself—and about God—and about life cannot be absolutely proved. You can be glad of that. If God tied us tight in proofs and dragged us to him, we would have no chance to choose him. He wants us to come through love, not calculation. If men could prove that goodness pays, all goodness would disappear in selfish common sense. Logic keeps the doorway to belief wide open, but it does not force us through.

That does not mean that faith is blind. It has guides. How can we know which religion is right? Here are three hints on a subject which fills libraries:

(1) True religion **has to fit the world** as you know it. It goes beyond daily experience and scholarship and science, but it cannot go against them. It cannot require you to believe that the sun is shining when you can see that it is raining. It might ask you to believe that the whale swallowed Jonah, which is unusual, but not that Jonah swallowed the whale, which is absurd. Your religion has to be a master plan into which all that you know will fit.

(2) Recognizing truth is **like falling in love.** Something in you responds to reality as it does not to error. You could not think it all out for yourself but, once it is told to you, you say, "Yes, that's it!" Intellect is only the next-to-the-highest human faculty.

(3) A true religion **has to work.** It will line you up with the way the universe operates; error will set you to futile bucking against life's currents. This does not mean that the religious person will have more money or better health or less suffering. It does mean that he will be better able to handle whatever circumstances come to him. He will be stronger, more serene, more deeply happy. Only right religion can save a country from breaking up against the laws of creation.

Everyone has to live by faith. Judas had as much faith as John, but he put his faith in different things. The atheist makes as wild a guess as does the Christian—far wilder, indeed. The libertine is as abandoned to his theory as is the saint. Your faith may be shabby or sublime, it may be consistent or it may change every time your dinner disagrees with you—but you have to have a faith. The only question is, "Will that faith be right or wrong?"

There is no use saying that the faith which is right for one person may be wrong for another. A belief is either true or false. Two plus two do not make three or five in spiritual matters any more than they do in arithmetic. Whether you are nothing but a bundle of tissues or an immortal soul, you certainly are not both. There either is such a God as Jesus described or there is not.

Everything in life—happiness, love, success—depends on your hitting on the right answer to the question, "Who am I?" If you act on a mistaken idea about yourself, you are certain to get into trouble. If you think you are a child of God, and there really is no God, you will beat in your poor head against hard facts. And think of the damage of the opposite mistake.

The Bible's opening chapters give you two tremendous statements about yourself. "God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness' " *(Genesis 1:26)*. That is who you are! Being made in God's image means, not that you look like God, but that you are like him. There is something in you which answers to him. You are not a piece of the Divine Being, as the pantheists believe. Rather, you and the Ultimate Power of the universe have a kinship. You talk the same language—though you can spend eternity learning more of his words. You are not an orphaned waif, an unknown found on the doorstep of the world. You have connections. You are not alone and you need never be lonely.

Genesis, which puts the depths of philosophy in pictures so simple that a child can understand them, says further, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" *(Genesis 2:7)*. That is you. Physically you are nothing but the dust of the ground—first cousin to an animal and second cousin to a test tube. But God took this instrument of nerves and cells, which he may have spent a long time developing, and gave it to a living soul which he had made. You are not body and soul; you are a soul which is using a body—for awhile.

With all this, you will still never get the full answer to

your question, "Who am I?," until you hear what Jesus said. "Our Father" *(Matthew 6:9)*, he called God and declared that "the very hairs of your head are all numbered" *(Matthew 10:30)*. He said that the little child they wanted to send away was of infinite value to the Almighty Being *(Matthew 18:10)*. He told the story of the wayward son whose father's love never faltered *(Luke 15:11-32)*. Of whom was he speaking? Of you. It was you whom God so loved that "he gave his only begotten Son" *(John 3:16)*. That is the sort of person you are.

And there is more than that. To get the final answer to your question, "Who am I?", you must look at the Cross on Calvary. All of history and philosophy is focused there. The Cross demonstrates man's place in the universe. There the infinite Creator showed how much he cares for mankind. Stand before your mirror again and, as you see that mysterious something back of your eyes, remember all of this and say, "So that is what I am!"

II. Who is God?

To get an answer to the question, "Who am I?", we referred to God. Now we had better consider who or what God is.

The word *God* can have a million meanings. That is why it is foolish to say, "I don't care about a man's creed so long as he believes in God." What he calls God may be what you would call the devil. Theology is simply the dictionary which says what you mean by the words you use when you talk about religion.

Everthing in life depends for you on what you mean by that three-letter word, *God*. You may say, "I give up—it's all beyond me." But every choice you make forces you to have some idea of what is the highest good.

The word *God* refers to the power behind everything. In that sense, everyone who is not incurably frivolous believes in God. For the astronomer, God is the principle of order in the skies. For the physicist, God is the mysterious might which packed the atom. For the biologist, God is the vital force surging out through all plant and animal life. For the philosopher, God is the first cause. All of these are right —but they stop too soon.

Both ends of the telescope give us clues to the Source-of-All, and the most revealing are at the bottom end—in the mind of the astronomer who calculates and thrills with awe. Along with the physical facts there are such facts as love and intelligence and conscience and goodness and a sense of beauty—and these cannot be higher than their Source, any more than a stream can run up hill. Such things cannot have sprung from what is unconscious and unintelligent and unmoral. As the Bible puts it, "He that formed the eye, shall He not see?" *(Psalms 94:9)*. The finest loves of earth give a clue to their Infinite Source—"Like as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord . . ." *(Psalms 103:13)*.

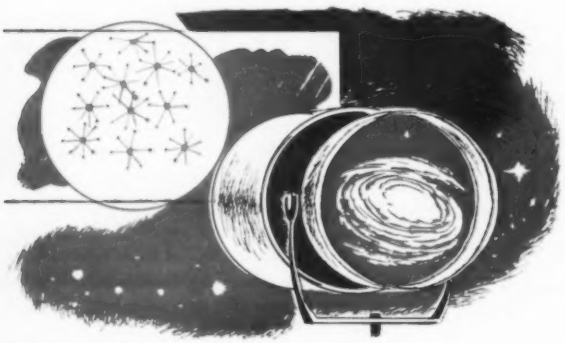
To call God personal does not mean that he is an old man with a long, white beard. It means that we trace to the very Source qualities which have no meaning apart from personality. It does not mean that we are shrinking our idea of God down to human terms, but that we are lifting it above the subhuman. It means that we think God is more like a person than like a dynamo. We are only beginning to understand a tiny part of him, but we come closest when we think of him in terms of the highest that we know.

The Church's statement is "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." That means he is *at least* that, and infinitely more. When we can find higher terms for God we will use them. Meanwhile, we can stop with nothing less.

To know that God is "He" and more than "It" makes our daily life completely different. We know then that there can be a personal relationship between us and the Ultimate Power in the universe. If that be true, then prayer is possible. More than that, failure to pray is an abnormality, since it is an ignoring of reality. Prayer is the natural connection between a personal creature and a personal God.

Some people are frightened from this thought because they feel that the Infinite Being is too vast to be concerned with each one of the earth's millions. But infinite power is microscopic as well as telescopic. You can know ten people fairly well. God is so much greater than you that he can know ten billion people thoroughly. A God who could know only nations and centuries would be less great than a God who knows when every sparrow falls.

Christians have found that they know God in three ways —as they know the sun as the source of light and heat and solar gravity. We know God as the Father who controls the earth; we have found him in Jesus Christ; and we have an inner knowledge of him as the Holy Spirit. When talk of one which is three and three which are one begins to confuse us, it has missed its purpose; for the idea of the Trinity should make God easier to know. The Bible names God in three ways so that we may see him wherever we look.



Both ends of the telescope give us clues to the Source-of-all. . . .

It is as the Holy Spirit that God is most intimately known. He is God within us. When God seems very close to us in prayer, when he comforts us in sorrow, when the voice of conscience guides us, when in beauty we sense the sublime—that is God the Holy Spirit.

There is mystery in the thought of God—but it is not the mystery of a closed door but of endless vistas which lead us on and on. God is so knowable that little children can love him dearly, and so awesome that the heavenly hosts fall down on their faces before him, unable to endure the presence of his glory. To know him is more important for you than your job, or your food, or your health, or your family. Apart from him everything is wrong; with him everything is right.

III. Who is Jesus Christ?

WHO IS Jesus Christ—for you? Your answer to that determines your whole life. Nations and eras are judged by their attitudes to Christ.

Perhaps for you now he is only a wonderful person—a heroic figure from the long ago. That is a good place to start. Many of his first followers came to him simply because he was the most attractive person they had ever met. He was the most popular dinner guest in Jerusalem. Children ran to his arms. People loved him for himself. But as they followed they found in him what took them clear beyond all earthly depths. They came to see him as divine because they just could not keep on thinking of him in merely human terms.

You can take that way. Read his teachings. Study the marvel of his life. Catch his quality as he goes to his crucifixion. See what he has been doing through the centuries and is still doing today. If, with open mind and heart, you follow this course, you are likely to end, as so many others have done, by bowing your head and exclaiming, "My Lord and my God."

There are other reasons. We have to explain his claim to divinity, his taking the Messiah's role—"I and my Father are one" *(John 10:30)*, "Thy sins be forgiven" *(Matthew 9:2)*, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" *(Matthew 11:28)*. These are either the ravings of a madman or the deceit of an outrageous liar or they are true. But those first two possibilities just will not fit the story. Never was a mind more balanced or less liable to evil.

SOME have wondered whether Jesus ever lived. No serious scholar doubts it today. The sudden twist which human history took early in the first century must have had some powerful cause. The character of Jesus is totally different from that which the religious imagining of his time would have invented. It is psychologically impossible that the tendency to add legends to the life of an unusual person would have produced the sort of story the gospels tell. The record of Jesus and what he has done to the world must be explained. Strange and mysterious though it is, the best explanation is still that, when the human race was ready, at the crisis point of history, God gave a special revelation of himself in Jesus Christ.

Not all the evidence is in the past. Jesus has been present through the centuries. He is with us today as no mortal man could be. You would welcome a memorial to any other hero, but how would you feel if you came upon a monument which said, "Erected to the memory of Jesus of Nazareth who departed this life nineteen centuries ago"? We do not remember him—we meet him.

Thinkers' statements of how Jesus Christ is God are like a child's explanation of the solar system. Some say that all men have the Spirit of God and Christ has more than others. But that will not do. Christ is not merely greater—he is different. The seers and prophets have been on man's side, reaching out toward God; Christ is on God's side, reaching out toward man. If the greatest of men were to walk into the room, we would all rise; if Christ were to walk into the room, we would all drop to our knees.

Christ is the Word—the language of Heaven translated into man's vocabulary. The world and man's inner sense of God give clues to him—but they leave souls hungry before the mysterious and unknowable. Abstract ideas cannot satisfy men's hearts. They will bow before a carved stone if they have nothing more definite to worship. Jesus makes God very real and definite.

The man who cleans your ash pit may be a better Christian than the greatest scholar in the land.

His followers see "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" *(II Corinthians 4:6)*. Like a crack in a live volcano, he gives us a glimpse into the very heart of the universe.

He is the Mediator—closing the gap so that men can reach God. Because of him we need no priesthood to relay our communication to the Divine. We bring our confession and our petitions directly to God, and we close our prayers, "Through Jesus Christ. Amen."

Jesus gave God's rules for living. And he demonstrated how perfect goodness looks in our human scene. He makes right living a form of comradeship with him.

Christianity is not a ritual or a philosophy or a science—it is a relationship to a Person. That is why the man who cleans your ash pit may be a better Christian than the greatest scholar in the land. To know Jesus Christ is to have religion. We can know him as the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. We can know him as the ideal man, with his gentleness and strength and courage and joyousness and love of beauty—above all who ever lived the perfect hero type. We can know him as a Savior and as a friend, whose word to us is, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" *(Matthew 28:20)*.

IV. What is life for?

WHY DID God make you? The Bible tells why in the shortest and best definition of God that has ever been given—"God is love" *(I John 4:16)*. Love cannot exist in loneliness; love wants to share good things. Therefore, God gave you life.

The catechism begins, "Question 1—*What is the chief end of man?* Answer—*Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.*" In other words, your purpose in life is to be a good advertisement for your Maker and to enjoy living. Those purposes merge. You glorify God when you enjoy life, and you enjoy life when you glorify God by loving and obeying him.

All God's commandments have the theme, "Thou shalt not make a bad bargain with life." If stealing, lying, and adultery could lead to happiness, the Ten Commandments would have required them. Christ commenced the Sermon

on the Mount *(Matthew 5:2-11)* with his rules for happy living. Melancholy defeats God's purpose.

This does not mean that life is intended to be easy. The Bible describes this world as a place of struggle to fit us for something better. Happiness is not always a laughing matter. It is the deep happiness of those who fight and win which Christianity offers. Good Christians do not escape trouble—but they are amazingly tough. They cannot be defeated. They know that God never closes all the doors to joy. A sour face is a heresy because, as Paul said, our loving God "giveth us richly all things to enjoy" *(I Timothy 6:17)*.

V. What is sin?

We just saw what God's purpose for man's life is. Sin is whatever thwarts that purpose. It is whatever spoils the plot of the glorious romance which God intended to be the story of your life.

Modern man has dropped the word *sin* from his vocabulary—and so the world is perishing of a disease without a name. Sin is our frustration and lovelessness, our enmity and worry and feverish materialism. Many people are dogged by futility and boredom. Many are disappointed in themselves, harried by memories they cannot change, ashamed of habits they cannot break. Minds are battlefields of contrary impulses and crossed-up emotions. That man is lost in sin who has lost his enthusiasm, who has lost his purpose in living, who has lost his sense of God. Sin is not only wrongdoing but a wrong inward state, though each will produce the other.

If you run afoul of the physical laws you get hurt; just as surely, if you break life's spiritual laws you get into trouble. That is sin's punishment. But sin is more than that. It is personal—it is disloyalty to a love. It is a wrong done to a loving God. It requires forgiveness. That is why man by himself cannot make it right.

God exists, so living which ignores him is sure to be out of order. We were designed to be centered on God, so that when we operate around any other center we pound ourselves to pieces, like a flywheel which is out of balance.

The whole world is cursed by sin, and every human being has a tendency to evil *(Romans 3:23)*. Why is that? Some say that it is because we are souls in animal bodies, so that the passions and impulses of our physical nature are forever dragging us toward evil. Some locate the source of all sin in our pride; we refuse to submit to God and so we become the slaves of evil.

Our sin comes from our freedom. God did not want fellowship with puppets but with people. He therefore had to make us free to sin, if we so chose. But sinning tears away our power to choose good. Only their Creator can give back to sinners the freedom they have lost.

VI. What is salvation?

We have seen how the story of mankind tends to tragedy. A loving God has created beings who could enjoy his goodness and respond to his love. But they have turned their backs on him. They have used their freedom to spoil his creation. They have driven themselves from Eden. That is the story of your life. It is the story told by the headlines in your newspapers. It is the story of your neighbors' broken hopes and broken homes and broken hearts.

But God wrote another chapter to the story; "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" *(John 3:16)*.

Jesus Christ came to set a world that is lost back on the path. *Lost* means that you have missed your way. It means waking in the morning without any great purpose to make the day worth-while. It means being lost from certainties. It means realizing in middle-age that you are not as fine a person as in your youth you had expected to be. It means turning the God-given power in the atom to destruction and not to blessing, so that the old saying that the world is lost without Christ now has a physical meaning, with a time limit attached.

Jesus Christ takes us back to God. He heals our sick souls and satisfies our hungers. He gives us beauty in place of ugliness and joy instead of discontent, and peace for our troubled minds and light through our darkness.

How does he do this? Partly by his teachings; partly by the attraction of his marvelous life which makes us want to follow him. But Christians have always known that it is specially by his death *(I Thessalonians 5:10)* and Resurrection that Jesus has made them able to rise out of their sins into new life.

If he had sidestepped the Crucifixion, there would be no Church today.

Our aversion to the crude use of the expression, "saved by the blood of Christ," as a sort of incantation may make us forget that it is true. We cannot trace the mechanics of something so far beyond where our minds operate, but we cannot doubt the fact. The Bible never explains how this comes about. It simply asks us to accept it with wonder and joy.

It does say what we all feel, that our sinning piles up a weight of guilt on us which not even God's love can simply brush away. The wrong we do leaves us owing something that we cannot pay. It is because Jesus gave himself for us that we can get release from this. If he had sidestepped the Crucifixion there would be no Church today.

As we see on the Cross what our sort of sins did to this man of perfect love and goodness, it makes us hate their awful ugliness as nothing else could. As we see there the wonder of his love for us, it does something in us which neither teaching nor punishment could do.

It happens because Jesus Christ is more than a man. He has direct connections with every human being. His Crucifixion reveals a love that is at the very heart of all creation. That is why a person who has been dragging along, cynical and snarled in guilt, gets a new view of what life is really like when he sees that Jesus loved him so much that he died to set him free from evil *(Romans 5:8)*—a view that can send him out transformed, like a man released from prison. As we realize that Jesus rose triumphant from his death, we find the

power to leave our sinful selves and join him in newness of life.

The tie between us and this is faith. Faith is an elusive word because its meaning in religion is not the meaning it has in common use. It does not mean accepting something as true. You may accept the whole Creed as fact, and be a complete heathen. "The devils also believe, and tremble" *(James 2:19)*.

Faith means giving yourself to something. It means giving yourself to Jesus Christ so completely that he becomes the Lord of all your life. It means such a devotion to him that his spirit actually moves into your body *(Galatians 2:20)*.

What Christ did for us must be answered by what we do if this new life is to be ours. We must say to him in deep sincerity, "I am dissatisfied with myself and ashamed of all my sins (here think of definite sins). I long to be what God intended me to be. Lift me, by the love I see upon the Cross. Take command of life, as I give myself to thee. Be the Lord and Master of my every thought and act. Be with me now and evermore. Amen."

VII. What comes after death?

PLAYING WITH that question can be a sort of parlor game. Or we may shun it for fear of commercializing goodness by tying it to rewards and punishments. But the question is strangely practical. When men drop the idea of a future life they tend to play fast and loose with this one. History shows that cultures which lose the belief in immortality tend to tyranny and social evils—because temporary creatures get less respect than do immortal souls.

You may not worry much about yourself, but when someone you love dies, and you are appalled by the thought that something so fine may just be thrown away—then you are facing what you think of God and of the decency of things. The Christian reasons that: (a) God is good; (b) a human personality is precious; (c) a good God would not discard what is precious; (d) therefore, human personality is saved.

The Bible teaches that the soul uses the body like an instrument it can do without. We shall recognize each other after death *(John 14:1-5)*. Love is not broken. We will remember the life on earth. We will be freer. Life will go on in the direction it had in this world. Those pointed toward God rise nearer to him. Those inclined away from God go farther from him *(I Corinthians 15:12-20; 35-58)*—which is a terrible enough thought without adding pitchforks, as the Bible never does. The common ideas of heaven and hell are confused by pictures from heathen mythology and deviled meat cans.

The Bible cannot give us guide-book descriptions of the next world because all our words and imaginings are limited to the sort of things we have seen. The Bible does give us symbols with the meaning—"It is like this only infinitely more so." Harps stand for beauty, singing for joy, bodies for selfhood, thrones for glory, burning for disposal of what is useless, torment for the misery of godlessness.

The impossibility of imagining the life to come has led people to try to tie it to this world. Some believe in a dreary round of rebirths in other bodies. This denies the onward call of God and has no meaning when we ask what sort of identity the soul carries from one body to the next. Some believe our immortality is only in our influence on future generations. But this preserves only a tiny part of the real personality, and often gives the largest immortality to the least worthy souls. Such earth-bound solutions only postpone the problem, for astronomers are sure that the earth itself will some day be destroyed.

If those beyond sent signals to us, the next world would be only a physical annex of this one. We have our hold on it by faith, not by sound waves nor sight. But once we know that Jesus Christ is still alive, we know that death is an illusion and life is real. The Christian faith leaves us looking out into endless vistas of beauty and glory and joy *(Romans 8:11, 18, 24, 38, 39)*. It answers the question, "Who am I?", with the assurance, "You are a child of God, whose love you know through Jesus Christ—a love on which you can depend today and tomorrow and through everything that lies ahead."

The Bible cannot give us guide-book descriptions of the next world. . . .

VIII. What is the Bible?

BY HIMSELF man would be imprisoned in life's mysteries. His earth-bound mind could never break out to discover what and why and from where he is. God would be vaguely felt but unknowable. But man is not by himself. God is love, and it is the nature of love to communicate. The record of God's communication is in the Bible.

God chose special men to transmit his revelations. And he chose a special nation. Just as an industry will use one of its small plants to introduce a new process, God used one people, living at the cross roads of the Orient and Occident. God was not neglecting the Incas and the Malays when he gave his special revelations to the Hebrews. He has "left not himself without witness" *(Acts 14-17)*. All peoples "show the work of the law written in their hearts" *(Romans 2:15)*. And what God did in Palestine was for the benefit of all mankind.

The Bible gives us the deepest truths about the universe and human destiny. Its rules for getting the most from life are our manufacturer's directions. It demonstrates its laws by accounts of great and ruined nations, of blessed and broken lives. Its poetry lifts our souls to sublime heights which they could never scale alone. It is the voice of a loving father. It is a personal contact with the Infinite Power.

The Bible tells us of Jesus Christ—of what he said and did and does. It brings us into the company of those who knew him on earth. Its first accounts of him were written within about fifteen years of his time on earth.

The Church is wherever people together are getting the spiritual supply that comes from God and living by it.

The Bible tells us enough to satisfy our needs—but not enough to satisfy our curiosity. When churches tell more than the Bible does about such matters as their own powers and departed souls and heavenly dealings, Christianity becomes distorted. "Where the Bible is silent, we are silent," is a good rule for a church.

The Bible uses many literary forms. If parts of the Old Testament, which some had thought to be history, turn out to be inspired truth in parables, they are no less the word of God. Ancient writers often used the apocalyptic form to give a message in gorgeous imagery without intending a literal meaning for each verse.

Ironical passages, as in Ecclesiastes, set up the world's fallacies so that faith can knock them down. The Bible shows the awesome spectacle of a primitive people, whose early ideas of God were semi-barbaric, being given ever higher perceptions of him until they receive the perfect truth in Jesus Christ?

How do we know that the Bible is the word of God? We know it, not by blind faith, but by "the Holy Spirit bearing witness." As we read, something within us says, "This is of God." It was this inner recognition which collected the Bible from among the other Hebrew and Greek writings which the Church once used and threw away. Those we have were long recognized as totally different. It was a sort of afterthought when the Church finally said officially, "These are the Bible."

There may be parts which the Holy Spirit has not yet made your working Bible. It does not have to be all or none. If there are any parts which are God's truth for you, you have a Bible. But do not ignore the rest. Christians constantly find that parts which have seemed obscure, perhaps even baffling or offensive, all at once come blazing into light.

Miracles may bother you. Christian philosophy allows for them. Nature's God can manage nature. Remember that there were special reasons for the Bible's miracles which do not exist today. There will be no occasion for another virgin birth until there is another incarnation. So it is with all Christ's miracles. Not one of them is pointless. They all demonstrate some timeless truth. But if any Bible miracle remains a hopeless problem for you, steer around it and keep going. Do not let it keep you from the miracle of the Bible itself. It has today the power that makes men great and topples governments. It is still more up-to-date than this morning's newspaper.

Protestants believe that God can speak directly to everyone from the Bible. Teachers and study books are helpful, but no priestly interpreter can deny your right to read for yourself what the Bible says. Therefore a hearsay knowledge is not adequate. You must find for yourself what the Bible says to you.

IX. What is the Church?

THE CHURCH, Christians believe, is not a human institution at all. God put it on earth through Jesus Christ *(Ephesians 1:22-23)*. The history of the past twenty centuries gives reason for this faith. Throughout these years the strange power which the New Testament promises to the Church has actually come from it into human lives and into nations. When it has fallen into the hands of unworthy men, some mysterious quality has enabled it to rise from its betrayal more fresh and youthful than before.

But what church do we mean? We see cathedrals and gospel tabernacles, new cults and ancient hierarchies. Which of these is Christ's Church?

The "we only" churches have an answer. Counting on some external sign—a sacrament or creed or succession of hands on heads—they all claim that theirs is the only true Church. But tying spiritual claims to external conditions makes straight for superstition—and absurdity.

It may help us find the answer if we remember the Bible's repeated picture of the Church as the channel of the water of life *(Ezekiel 47:1-12)*, with God as its "fountain of living waters" *(Jeremiah 2:13)*. The Church is wherever people together are getting the spiritual supply that comes from God and living by it. Some churches have mixed this with so much of the dust and corruption of the earth that it is unwholesome. Some have let accumulations so fill the channels that the flow has almost stopped, though the worshipers still gather around.

The Holy Spirit and the Bible show a church how to be connected so directly with the Source that the flow will be pure and strong. Right origins and creed and worship may help—though good connections may be the most readily stopped up because pride diminishes the daily labor of keeping them clear. The connections of the true Church are invisible. They do not go through ancestors. They go directly from the fellowship of believers to God.

In its early years the Church had heroic and miraculous success. Then it suffered two corruptions. First, the emperor Constantine made it a state institution. It became gaudy and worldly and political. The Bishop of Rome was enabled by his connections with the government to dominate the Church. Forgeries soon claimed for him a succession from Peter, though the Bible never says that Peter had any successor or went to Rome or was head of the Church. It shows James as the Church's presiding head. Paul says of Peter, "I withstood him to the face" *(Galatians 2:11)*. The great text in which Christ says of Peter's recognition of him as the Son of God, "Upon this rock I will build my Church" *(Matthew 16:18)*, was distorted to make Peter himself the Church's foundation. The Bible would surely have men-

tioned something so important if Christ had really entrusted his work to an elaborate and pretentious hierarchy.

The second corruption came from bringing into the Church masses of unconverted heathen because their rulers claimed conversion. The Church did not change their pagan ideas—it absorbed them by compromise. Altars and polytheism and magic and priestcraft and Hades came into the Church under new names.

With all this, the Church never completely lost the spirit and the power of Christ. It tamed the savagery of the Dark Ages and preserved the Scriptures.

This unbreakable touch with Christ and the Bible kept men rebellious at the evils of their Church. As enlightenment spread, in spite of torture and death, this indignation grew. Earlier reformers had everything Martin Luther had except a way to stay alive. Those who were free to follow God's leading welcomed the Reformation. Some rulers, not all of them good men, protected the reform because it offered them escape from Rome's political oppression. Peoples were set free to read the Bible, to think, and to worship. A new experience of Christ brought a springtime of enlightened thinking and purer living. Democracy began to flower.

The Reformation brought changes in the Roman Church. Some of the abuses were stopped. Other abuses were defended. The hierarchy took steps to protect itself from any more independent thinking by clamping the Church in more rigid authority. This has a dictatorship's impressiveness and efficiency. It gives definite guidance and discourages private folly. But it also avoids that free striving by which the Christian grows. It hinders a soul's direct communion with its God. It brings the abuses which come from arbitrary power and blocks the reform which can come only through free consciences.

Centuries before the Reformation, the churches in eastern Europe refused to be controlled by Rome. They are today the Orthodox Church. They feel that theirs is the original Christian Church because of its unbroken tradition. Roman Catholics say that theirs is because of its continuous government. Protestants say that theirs is because the Reformation restored the Church which Roman and Orthodox errors had obscured.

The Reformation produced some giants of Bible scholarship. Some of these started movements which remain today as denominations. John Calvin, for example, influenced scores of religious refugees who came to Geneva in Switzerland. These went home to found Calvinistic (Presbyterian) Churches all over Europe. Protestants were divided by geography and by being early or late stages in the Reformation. And there have been fresh movements, like that which started the Methodist Church two centuries ago.

Most of Protestantism is essentially one Church under different names. Eighty per cent of Protestant Americans are in six great denominational groups, and most of them could be at home in any of these groups. There is some advantage in having a variety of forms of worship available because people do not all find in the same way their best help in approaching God. Variety adds richness to the knowledge of the inexhaustible truth of Christ, and prevents a dull and rigid uniformity.

But denominations bring a constant temptation to strife and pride and trust in nonessentials. They waste the Church's force by inefficiency. These evils are lessening. In sympathy and in common action Protestants are constantly drawing closer together—at every level, from the small town to the worldwide "ecumenical" Council of Churches.

What, out of all this, is the Church? Wherever people together are finding God through Jesus Christ, and are trying to worship and serve him, they have the Church. As the Reformation put it, "Where the word of God is rightly preached and heard, there is the Church." The Church goes through history, glorious as an army with banners. The gates of hell and man's folly cannot prevail against it. It is the strength of nations. It has the mysterious power which every life needs.

Can a person be a Christian outside the Church? The water of life, which the Church draws from its Source, is poured into the community. People may have some of this spilled-over inspiration and teaching without ever coming near a church. It can produce noble lives. But those who say, "I believe in Christianity but not churchianity," forget that Christianity has never gone where the Church has not gone. The Bible makes it plain that one cannot be completely obedient to Christ and stay aloof from the fellowship of His followers. God grants a blessing through his Church which cannot be had in any other way. If one who is trying to follow Christ could not find a church that was worthy of his membership, he would have to start one.

To keep our souls from being stifled by material cares we need the Church's reminders of God and its promptings to worship and duty. Our bewildered fellow men, groping for faith and tempted by false gods, need to know what we have found. We are not likely to shout it from a soap box. But when we join the Church, all who know us see that we have taken a stand for Jesus Christ.

The Church needs us in its great work of proclaiming the gospel, supporting democracy, fighting social evils, strengthening homes, giving ideals to youth. In no place on earth, where there has not been a Christian Church, could you send your children to a public school or vote in a free election or have a diseased appendix treated. The Church's work is always partly undone because it needs more help like yours. Do you see faults in the Church? That is a special reason for you to join it, because only the members have a chance to make the Church what God wants it to be.

A perfect life is not required of those who join—the Church is the place for sinners who are trying to be better. Perfect faith is not required—we spend a lifetime in the Church growing in belief. Only four or five basic questions are asked—"Do you accept Jesus Christ as the Divine Lord of your life?", "Will you try to be a loyal member of the Church?" . . . The only invitation to join the Church which you need is the one that Jesus Christ has given.

When people join the Church, the local congregation is only a door that they use. Whenever they move they simply shift their connection to another congregation in the great Church of Jesus Christ. To this their love and loyalty belong. It is a home for their souls, a center for their daily living, a place for work which gives them greatness, the scene of their finest friendships, a source of endless blessings.

More than that—the Church is a fellowship which goes clear beyond this world. The "Communion of Saints" joins those in this world who worship God to those who worship him in Heaven. The Church on earth is a part of the Church above. When you join it you come close to the Christians everywhere on earth, and to the Apostles, and to the Saints, and to those we love whom death has taken from our sight, but who are still near us in this fellowship which death can never break.

Bible Readings

Here are Bible chapters everyone should know. They were selected in this order by a large number of ministers and laymen who were asked by the American Bible Society to name helpful chapters.

John 14	Psalm 1	I Corinthians 15
Psalm 23	John 15	John 10
Matthew 5	Isaiah 40	Psalm 51
Romans 8	Psalm 27	Psalm 37
I Corinthians 13	Psalm 103	John 1
Psalm 91	Psalm 121	Revelation 22
Matthew 6	Philippians 4	Psalm 90
John 3	Isaiah 55	Joshua 1
Psalm 46	Revelation 21	Psalm 19
Romans 12	Luke 15	Matthew 11
Hebrews 11	Ephesians 6	Exodus 20
Matthew 7	John 17	I John 3
Isaiah 53	Luke 2	I John 1

X. What is goodness?

YOU SHOULD be able to tell a Christian by the way he walks down the street. When you accept Jesus's slant toward God and man and destiny, it transforms everything about you from your conscience to your sense of humor. To take Jesus as the Lord of all life makes such a difference that the Bible says it is like being born again. Unless Christians are very unlike those who do not share their faith, something is wrong.

Christ guides us less as a lawgiver than as a companion. He said that the Ten Commandments are right, but far from adequate. The Sermon on the Mount is not a rule book—it is a picture book. It says, "If you look like this, you are a Christian." It is love—love for God and man—which tells a Christian what he ought to do. But he would be wrong to ignore what other Christians through the years have discovered about the way to live. This accumulated wisdom is transmitted through the Church. Here are some of its great words:

Truth. The love of truth is akin to the love of God, for truth is with him. Deceit breaks faith with reality and thus does a wrong to God and man. The Christian advertiser, historian, scientist, and neighbor will have reverence for truth.

Purity. The power to bring a life into the earth is of God. Sex is sacred. As the expression of the highest love between a woman and a man, it is the source of endless beauty. Anything less is a perversion which corrodes the soul.

Life. A Christian is so in love with life that he wants to live it to the full. In play or work or friendship, he is impatient with what makes life shallow or mechanical.

Love. A Christian's thoughts are turned to others. His chief interests are outside himself. By this he is saved from the sensitiveness and resentment and selfishness and pride which spoil a mind that is turned inward on itself. Quarreling and anger are ruled out by love.

Home. God is the third party in a Christian marriage. His presence makes a home a sort of church, with its loves blessed and strengthened by him. Divorce may not always be a sin, but it is always a tragedy.

Vocation. A Christian sees his daily work as a calling with its most commonplace duties shining with the glory of serving God and man, and with Christian ethics controlling all his dealings.

Consecration. A man's confession of faith is written in his check book. It tells what he really believes are the highest values. A Christian knows that all that he has is God's property, from which he asks God for an allowance. To devote one-tenth to church and charity is an honored Christian tradition. Energy and skill are also trusts from God to be used for him.

Sharing the faith. The grateful Christian knows that what Christ has done for him He can do for anyone. He is appalled that people are living and dying without ever finding through Christ how wonderful life can be. All his love for God and for his fellow men gives him a burning eagerness to help others find what he has found. A Christian never fully understands his faith until he has tried to express it to someone else. The results of our attempts to share our faith show that miracles still happen.

There are no fences around a Christian's love and pity. He keenly feels the needs of men in all the world. The health of a church can be measured by its interest in missions. This shrinking world is doomed if powerful peoples anywhere follow evil faiths. Men and mankind must be saved through Jesus Christ.

Unworldliness. How about such matters of conscience as smoking or playing cards or dancing? It is true that small scruples let the mean-minded escape important virtues by a substitute morality which says, "I know I am a Christian because I do not smoke." But the love of Christ leaves no room for small disloyalties. Whatever makes full Christian living less likely for ourselves or others is wrong. Gambling and drinking endanger the sort of life that God intended. Christians are always under pressure from those who do not share their faith and so cannot understand their principles.

Social conscience. Sin is both personal and social. You may be personally faultless and yet base with the evil of your nation or race or corporation—if you condone it. A Christian knows that all men everywhere are his brothers because they are God's well-loved children. Their welfare is his concern. He longs for them to have a chance for what is best for their bodies and minds and souls. His is an endless fight against tyranny and war and all the evils which blight the life of men on earth. The Church must always lead in this struggle for righteousnes—not by attempting to control the government, but by producing citizens who will make their government an agency of God.

THERE is dynamite in the gospel. Christians who know that "God alone is Lord of the conscience" have upset empires. They are blasting at the evils in our present social order, driven by their love and pity. They are praying still their ancient prayer, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

SEEN AND HEARD

KSEW — Church's Voice in Alaska

As Christmas comes again this year, a brand-new radio station in Alaska will be broadcasting the age-old story of a star, the shepherds, and the baby born to be King. Station KSEW, wholly owned by the Presbyterian Board of National Missions, has been on the air since October 8, sending its sound waves out from Sitka. This will be its first Christmastide, and undoubtedly it will be a white one.

Combining a shrewd mixture of popular radio fare with up-to-date evangelistic methods, KSEW has been practical from the very start. It features a "hit parade" type of program with popular songs; but between selections a Christian disc jockey takes "Time Out for the Lord" with brief messages about faith. There's also the TNT program, meaning Time, News, and Temperature. A commercial is also offered on behalf of another TNT, The New Testament. The religious content of the daily schedule is the result of careful figuring; for KSEW is being heard in outlying homes of the 586,000-mile territory where missionaries have been unable personally to call.

Not all of the broadcasting from Sitka carries a religious stamp. Some of it is sheer, clever promotion. When it first went on the air, the station played whatever phonograph records were brought to it by local children. And when each platter was played, the announcer gave the name of the child who had delivered it. Needless to say, this prompted some avid listening as well as some unusual numbers. One old disc was called "The Bay Street Quick Step."

Most new radio stations are supposed to give their equipment and assigned frequencies a trial run during the nights just preceding their official opening day. Customary FCC regulations allow these try-out periods to extend from sunset to sunup, a fair enough time for ordinary stations. But in the land of the midnight sun, conditions are extraordinary; and KSEW got a scant two hours of darkness for their experiment. Nevertheless, the station opened as scheduled, secure with more than $8,000 worth of advertising contracts in hand. Cakes and flowers sent by neighbors adorned the studio. The playing of their theme song, "Pioneers of Christ," launched the broadcasting venture. This, the National Missions Sesquicentennial hymn, is to be the sign-on and sign-off music each day.

Sheldon Jackson Junior College, on whose campus the fledgling station has been quartered, is glad to have their new tenant. It will make possible new courses in radio and broadcasting. And the students can take part in programs of music, drama, and evangelism. To be known as "The Voice of Sheldon Jackson, Inc.," the new studios are part of a great missionary tradition.

Eskimos Etta Leavitt and Molly Ahvakama sing in the Sheldon Jackson choir.

The age-old story of Bethlehem's innkeeper was re-enacted on *The Greatest Story Ever Told* over the ABC network Sunday afternoon, December 19, at 5:30 P.M., EST. This time the innkeeper received a sympathetic treatment for a change. According to the script, he was not a heartless shekel grabber but instead a well-meaning chap hemmed in by limiting circumstances that prevented him from doing the good that he would.

"No Room at the Inn" continued a program series begun in 1947 when the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company began broadcasting dramatized Bible stories each week. It is noteworthy in these days of frenetic advertising on radio and TV that this company limits commercial announcements to the mere identification of the sponsor.

In the now more than seven years of these broadcast Bible dramas, the stations carrying the program have grown to 300. And the program itself has come in for an unusual number of awards and honors. These have been deserved. The acting has been expert, the direction and presentation in excellent taste. But something more has been done that churchmen appreciate. Scripts have been prepared with faithful attention to the Bible message. For the element of real drama, the New Testament is unsurpassable; and the wise writer knows it. "No Room at the Inn" avoids the introduction of new characters. There is still the Mother and the Babe, Joseph, the innkeeper's household, some shepherds, and townspeople. This is a tremendous story line admitting of no improvement. For this is the Incarnation. —J. C. WYNN

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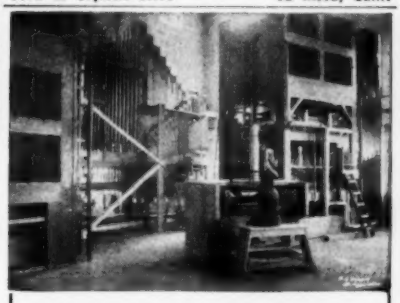

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WE'VE BEEN ASKED

Question: Is the command, "You shall be holy, for I am holy" (I Peter 1:16), as important as the command, "repent"?

Answer: It would be a serious mistake to think that God really means some commands but does not expect his people to keep others. Because we sin, we must repent; because God is holy and is our Lord and rightly claims our loyalty, we are to live holy lives. We have no right to ignore either duty.

What does it mean to be *holy*? The Greek word means basically "to be consecrated or devoted to God." The Christian consecrated to God will be dedicated to God in all his life, not only in worship but also in daily living and in relations with other people. God's grace forgives us our wrongdoing and gives us entrance into the Christian life. God's gift of the Spirit gives us the power and direction for useful and wholesome lives. If we really believe and are consecrated to God, our faith and consecration cannot be limited to mere words or formal worship; it will shape our lives.

It may startle us to read that the perfect holiness of God is our standard. His integrity, goodness, and kindness challenge us to live lives of integrity, goodness, and kindness. Jesus set forth the same high standard. He said to be merciful or perfect as God our Father is *(Matthew 5:48; Luke 6:36)*. The Bible sets the standard high. Fifty-one per cent goodness would not satisfy God. Would it honor God or satisfy our conscience to aim low? We owe to God full faith and loyalty. Better to recognize that, and ask forgiveness when we fall short, than to think God wants so little that we can easily attain it.

Question: What does it mean to "witness" or "witness through fellowship"?

Answer: *Witness* is an important New Testament word. The verb *to witness* occurs dozens of times, and nouns meaning "witness," "testimony," occur many times more. The key instruction to the disciples was to witness for Christ in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth *(Acts 1:8)*.

The witness testifies that some statement is true or that some person deserves trust. In the New Testament, Christians testify that God sent Christ to save men, that it is urgently important to believe in Christ.

The witness speaks from experience. He tells what he has seen and heard and knows is true. The Christian witness testifies that by faith he has found the gospel to be true; he testifies that God has been good to him, that Christ is his Lord; he gratefully recommends the gospel to others.

The obvious way to give such a witness is by word. This is the basic way in which the Apostles gave their witness. But people pay serious attention to Christians only when they live by what they say. So the personal lives and the fellowship of the Christian group must express faith, joy, friendship, forgiveness, helpfulness, and honesty. We witness through fellowship when our Church life recommends the gospel to other people.

Question: Is the word "trinity" in the Bible? If not, why should we Christians use it?

Answer: The Bible never uses the word *trinity*, but it says things which have led the Church to discern three aspects of the nature and work of God. We must remember two things: 1. No human doctrine can express all the greatness and meaning of God. He is too great; we never fully grasp the mystery of his life and purpose. 2. The doctrine of the trinity is a doctrine about the one God. We do not believe in three gods; we believe in one God, and the doctrine of the trinity tries to state the three forms of the life and work of the one God.

Many New Testament passages suggest this three-fold revelation of God: I Corinthians 12:4-6; II Corinthians 13:14; I Peter 1:2 are samples. God the Father, great and sovereign beyond all our grasp; God uniquely present in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, active for our redemption and Lord of the Church; the Spirit of God present in the Church and the Christian to give joy, guidance, and power—the one God we know in these ways, and Christian conviction is that this variety of God's relation to men reflects a richness in the nature of the one God. This doctrine will be true and important only to those who know that in Jesus Christ God was present and active for their salvation, and that in the Holy Spirit sent by Christ the Lord God is present and active to help them. The doctrine expresses the meaning of God in the light of Christian faith and experience, and I think it best expresses what God has done, what he means to us as Christians, and what he has revealed himself to be.

—Floyd V. Filson
Professor of New Testament
McCormick Theological Seminary

NO BETTER PRESENTS

By MARY PEACOCK

It was the night before Christmas—but quite unlike the poem, all the creatures were stirring at the Turners' house. Yes, even a frisky mouse had scampered across the floor in front of the fireplace, his bright eyes eager to see what all the excitement was about.

And no wonder the Turners were excited—especially Sue. For this was to be Helga's first Christmas in America, and it was so important that it be a perfect one. Helga and her mother had come from Germany to live with the Turners, and she and Sue had quickly grown to be fast friends. Helga's mother could cook the best things to eat—why, she even baked homemade bread now and then, and cinnamon buns that were sweet and sticky. Helga loved her new home and her new friend. Now that Christmas Eve had come, she was fairly sparkling.

"You see," Sue was explaining, "we'll hang our stockings here on the mantel—yours at that end, and mine down here. And in the morning, they will be bulging with all kinds of good things."

"Yes?" breathed Helga. "You mean they will be full—all the way to the top?"

"Of course," laughed Sue. "There'll be nuts and oranges and candy, and maybe even a shiny new dime tucked 'way down at the tip of the toe."

"Oh, no!" said Helga. "Not money, too—what a rich man your Santa Claus must be."

Sue couldn't help laughing again.

"And that isn't all," she added. "There'll be presents underneath the tree—perhaps dolls for both of us, and new dresses—and lots and lots of gifts from Mother and Daddy and all my aunts and uncles and cousins. Look, Helga, here come Mother and Daddy now, bringing some of them."

Mr. Turner looked almost like a Christmas tree himself—his arms piled high with packages. Behind him came Mrs. Turner, carrying all she could hold—and back of her appeared Helga's mother, bringing the rest.

Sue and Helga arranged the gifts around the tree, and when they had finished, it looked almost as if Santa had already come and gone. Such a lot of packages—so brightly wrapped, so gaily tied.

"There," said Mrs. Turner. "Now let's sing some carols."

She took her place at the piano, and the others gathered around.

"Let's have Helga and her mother choose one of their favorite carols first, shall we?" Sue suggested.

Helga's blue eyes met her mother's, and almost at the same moment their lips moved.

"*Stille Nacht,*" Helga whispered.

"You call it 'Silent Night' in your language," her mother explained.

The strains of the old German carol rang through the room, followed by other old favorites. Finally Sue begged for her favorite poem, and Mrs. Turner read aloud "Twas the night before Christmas," while Helga listened, enchanted.

Sue sighed. "It certainly wouldn't seem like Christmas Eve without that."

"Or without the story from the Bible, either," her father added. Then, turning to the second chapter of Luke, he read the story of the Baby who lay in the manger—of the shepherds who watched their sheep—and the angels who sang.

When it was all over at last, and Mrs. Turner suggested that it was already past bedtime, Helga's mother said softly, "Thank you for a beautiful Christmas."

"Yes—thank you, thank you," Helga echoed.

"Don't thank us now," Sue interrupted. "Wait until tomorrow, when Christmas is really here. You'll have your presents then."

"But there are no better presents than this tonight," Helga's mother said. "This evening, you took us into your family. You have given us Christmas—in our hearts. Is it not so, Helga?"

"Oh yes, Mother," Helga answered. "The stockings, and the candies, and the gifts—even the shining silver dime—can't be nicer than this feeling inside of me."

Up the stairs went two happy girls, and one of them was surprised to find herself thinking a brand-new thought.

"You know something?" Sue confided as she squeezed Helga's hand. "You're right. My heart's all warm inside. Isn't yours?"

Helga nodded, and her yellow pigtails bobbed up and down. She was too happy to speak. But one thing was certain: Neither she nor Sue would ever forget this night before Christmas when they had discovered the spirit of Christmas together.

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